DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 415 CS 201 478

AUTHOR	Donelson, Ken, Ed.
TITLE	Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom.
INSTITUTION	Arizona English Teachers Association, Tempe.
PUB DATE	Feb 74
NOTE	214p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, Ill. 61801 (Stock No. 31478, $3.75 nonmember, $3.35 member)
JOURNAL CIT	Arizona English Bulletin; v16 n2 Entire Issue Feb 1974
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$10.20 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Class Activities; *Composition (Literary); English Instruction; *Evaluation Techniques; *Instructional Materials; *Rhetoric; Secondary Education; *Teaching Techniques; Undergraduate Study; Writing Exercises; Writing Skills; Written Language

ABSTRACT

The emphasis in the essays printed here is on the problems students face in writing and the problems teachers face in helping their students to improve. The contents include: "New and Renewed Rhetorics: Implications for Teaching," "Experience in Awareness, an Introduction to Creative Writing," "An Experiment with Christensen's 'Rhetoric of the Sentence' in Junior High School," "Films as an Aid to Teaching Creative Writing," "The Writer's Laboratory--One Approach to Composition," "Teaching Writing to the New Students of the '70s and '80s," "Teaching Writing to High School Students, Instilling Confidence," "Descriptive Writing: An Aid from Film and Story," "On Sensory Awareness, Compositions, and Flicks," "Trust, Write, Read . . . An Approach to Launching a Class in Creative Writing," "Handwriting," "Transformations and Stylistic Options," "Some Recent Questions and Some Not-So-Recent Answers about Teaching Composition," "Five Easy Pieces--A Paradigm for Style and Stylistics in Composition," "What You Can Do with Tests of Written Composition," "Writing Sample: An Assessment Tool," "Using Journals with 'Slow' High School Learners," "Composition Criteria," and "Improving Communication and Evaluation through the Class Profile." (RB)

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RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION
IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Volume 16 - - - Number 2

February 1974

ARIZONA ENGLISH bulletin

CS 201 478

ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN - - - - - - - - A Member of the NCTE Exchange Agreement

The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association, a non-profit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN exists to create effective statewide articulation of English teachers at all levels, to increase awareness of new ideas, programs, and movements in English, and to improve instruction at every level.

The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is published three times each year, in October, February, and April. It is supported and subsidized by the **Arizona** English Teachers Association, Northern Arizona University, the University of Arizona, and Arizona State University. Membership in the Arizona English Teachers Association (including subscription to the ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN) is $4.00 the year (a three year membership is available for $10.00). Send applications for membership to

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2. Writers who wish to submit brief notes should consider them for the Shoptalk section of a particular issue.
3. Avoid footnotes, unless they are absolutely necessary.
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Subjects for the 1973-1974 Issues: October (Humor and Satire in the English Classroom); February (Rhetoric and Composition); and April (Teaching Fiction: Short Stories and Novels).

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ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN

Winter 1973 - - - - - RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Preface to the Issue - - - - - - - RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

This issue is the longest BULLETIN ever published, and fittingly the topic is writing and the problems students face in writing and the problems teachers face in helping their students improve their writing. Thoughts put into words that may help students understand themselves a little better and communicate their thoughts and feelings more effectively is the whole point of this issue. The muliplicity of topics herein covered may help to convey some of the problems and enthusiasms about the composition process and the ways that process can be better handled in the classroom.

In the only previous BULLETIN (April 1968) dealing with composition, I cited eight points that seemed essential to creating a classroom conducive to teaching composition. Those eight points were and are

1. Too many teachers talk about teaching composition, and too few teachers ever get around to doing any teaching.
2. Students must write about something they care about to someone who will want to read and hear. That means students must be involved in determining topics and teachers must explore topics before the actual writing begins, they must help find real and believable audiences, and they must react to and evaluate writing rather than grade or correct.
3. Teachers need to use more model papers (student models, not professional) and explore with students how the actual writing process takes place.
4. Teachers need to write more of their own assignments, partly to prove their own literacy (often assumed, rarely proved), partly to check the worth of assignments.
5. Teachers should be less certain of supposed truths about writing (use topic sentences, outline before writing, etc.) and should avoid espousing them or spouting them in class until the teacher knows those truths really work and are used by real writers today.
6. Teachers should praise more than they criticize.
7. Teachers should avoid playing games with students, refusing to indulge in self-fulfilling prophecies like correcting (?) spelling errors, telling students to avoid those errors in the future, and then screaming after the next paper, "My God, I told you to stop misspelling words, and here you've done it again."If the teacher feels he has to prove he's the greatest critic and writer in the class, he ought to have a class election the first day. Student will be happy to elect him to anything he wants if that will get them out of the task of writing and too often teachers seem to be out to prove something when they evaluate.
8. English teachers often spend too much time talking about the joy of writing and then in fact write very little themselves. Teachers who talk about the joy of writing clearly know little of the fear and frustration and work that underlies any act of real writing. An English teacher who does not periodically write for

NEW AND RENEWED RHETORICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Frank J. D'Angelo, Arizona State University

An ad for Sun Airlines in a recent magazine advertisement announces: There is "Something new under the sun!" A picture portrays three Lear jets whizzing along at 600 miles an hour under a symbol of the sun, complete with facial expressions. The text proclaims that Sun Airlines is the Midwest's newest and fastest growing airline. Whether or not we agree with the sentiment expressed in the ad or with that in the original proverb ("There's nothing new under the sun"), the fact remains that when we speak of something new in rhetoric or composition, we generally mean something recent, or fresh, or unfamiliar, even if it is not always completely novel or original.

The study of rhetoric is not juvenile (it has a long and honorable historical tradition dating from Aristotle and Cicero and Quintilian), but it has been rejuvenated by fresh and vigorous ideas derived from classical rhetoric, from the scholarly schoolroom tradition, and from other sources. In this paper, I would like to consider what is new and renewable in the study of rhetoric and to consider the implications for the teaching of composition.

Classical rhetoric provides one source of fresh ideas for the composition classroom. The two books which best exemplify the wealth of ideas which can be derived from classical rhetoric are Edward P.J. Corbett's CLASSICAL RHETORIC FOR THE MODERN STUDENT and Young, Becker, and Pike's RHETORIC: DISCOVERY AND CHANGE.

Corbett's thesis is that classical rhetoric can still be the basis of a valid approach to writing and that it offers the only complete system of rhetoric which is available to us today. Corbett's book follows the classical division of rhetoric into invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. (Memory and delivery which are more appropriate to oral discourse will not be discussed here.) Invention (inventio) is the process of discovering the best available ideas or arguments to be used in any given case. The method used to discover these ideas is the topics. The topics are categories which suggest questions that can be asked by a student in order to discover ideas for writing. The following categories are based on Corbett's adaptation of the common topics for use by the modern student (p. 97):

The Common Topics
- Definition
  - A. Genus
  - B. Division
- Comparison
  - A. Similarity
  - B. Difference
  - C. Degree
- Relationship
  - A. Cause and Effect
  - B. Antecedent and Consequence
  - C. Contraries
  - D. Contradictions
- Circumstance
  - A. Possible and Impossible
  - B. Past Fact and Future Fact
- Testimony
  - A. Authority
  - B. Testimonial

C. Statistics
D. Maxims
E. Law
F. Precedents

In order to find out more about a subject, the student has merely to move from one topic to another, applying them, sometimes in the form of questions, to the subject at hand. Thus the student may begin to probe his subject by defining it or by looking for significant comparisons. Then he moves on to the other topics, all the while obtaining a clearer idea of his subject as he applies each topic in turn. For example, if the student were writing about Crest toothpaste, he might argue from the topic of comparison (subtopic of degree) that Crest is better than other toothpastes. Or using the topic of possible and impossible, the student might argue that if it is possible to send men to the moon, then it should be possible to solve the problem of pollution (or inflation or the problem of racial unrest) here on earth. The result of applying these topics to a particular subject is that when a student completes this procedure, he should have something to say, or at least he should be aware of his lack of knowledge and go on from there.

Once the student has gathered the ideas obtained through the process of invention, he then has to arrange these ideas in the best possible order. This process is known as arrangement (dispositio). Listed below is one formulation of the classical pattern of arrangement (Corbett, p. 273):

Arrangement
1. The Introduction
2. The Statement of Facts
3. The Confirmation or Proof of the Case
4. The Refutation of Opposing Arguments
5. The Conclusion

The value of this scheme is that it at least presents a clear pattern of organization for speakers and writers to follow. However, it is somewhat limited because it applies mainly to the organization of argumentative discourse. Nevertheless, this kind of organizational advice is much better than the traditional view that a discourse has roughly a beginning, a middle, and an end. This kind of advice is so general as to be almost worthless to the beginning writer.

After the student discovers ideas to write about and after he puts these ideas into an organizational pattern, he then has to consider the proper arrangement of his words and phrases and the best possible choice of these words and phrases. This process is the classical art of elocutio or style. In this view of style, some attention is paid to the classification of styles: the plain style for instructing, the middle style for moving, and the high or ornate style for delighting. Much attention is paid to the schemes and tropes, artful deviations from common usage in thought or in expression. Some typical examples of the schemes are parallelism, antithesis, parenthesis, opposition, polysyndeton, asyndeton, ellipsis, and various forms of repetition. Some typical examples of the tropes are the simile, metaphor, metonymy, personification, oxymoron, and various kinds of puns. In some modern textbooks devoted to classical rhetoric, sentences are classified by dividing them into loose, periodic, and balanced, with the rhetorical question or the antithetical sentence thrown in for good measure. Diction is generally classified by pairing opposites: abstract/concrete; general/particular; formal/informal; common words/jargon; and so forth.

Although the Young, Becker and Pike book, RHETORIC: DISCOVER AND CHANGE, owes much to tagmemic grammar and to field theory in physics, the ideas contained therein do not constitute a dramatic departure from those of classical rhetoric. The book is roughly divided into three main parts. The first section deals with invention, the second with arrangement, and the third with style.

The section on invention is perhaps the most innovative in the book. The theory of invention is set forth in a series of maxims, each of which is fully explained and exemplified. Then the key ideas contained in the maxims are brought together in a single chart which constitutes a kind of outline of the topics to be used in the heuristic procedure. This chart is reprinted below (RHETORIC: DISCOVERY AND CHANGE, p. 27) to allow for ease of discussion:

The Heuristic Procedure

	Contrast	Variation	Distribution
PARTICLE	1) View the unit as an isolated, static entity. What are its contrastive features, i.e., the features that differentiate it from similar things and serve to identify it?	4) View the unit as a specific variant form of the concept, i.e., as one among a group of instances that illustrate the concept. What is the range of physical variation of the concept, i.e., how can instances vary without becoming something else?	7) View the unit as part of a larger context. How is it appropriately or typically classified? What is its typical position in a temporal sequence? In space, i.e., in a scene or geographical array. In a system of classes?
WAVE	2) View the unit as a dynamic object or event What physical features distinguish it from similar objects or events? In particular, what is its nucleus?	5) View the unit as a dynamic process. How is it changing?	8) View the unit as a part of a larger, dynamic context. How does it interact with and merge into its environment? Are its borders clear-cut or indeterminate?
FIELD	3) View the unit as an abstract, multidimensional system. How are the components organized in relation to one another? More specifically, how are they related by class, in class systems, in temporal sequence, and in space?	6) View the unit as a multidimensional physical system. How do particular instances of the system vary?	9) View the unit as an abstract system within a larger system. What is its position in the larger system? What systemic features and components make it a part of the larger system?

The three main concepts listed on this chart are those of particle, wave and field - terms derived from field theory in physics. As applied to language, these three concepts can be considered as varying viewpoints from which to view a particular subject. As Kenneth Pike explains it:

> Language, seen as made of particles, may be viewd as if it were static--permanent bricks juxtaposed in a permanent structure, or as separate 'frames' in a moving-picture film. The view of language made up of waves sees language as dynamic--waves of behavioral movement merging one into another in intricate, overlapping, complex systems. The view of language as functional, as a system with parts and classes of parts so interrelated that no parts occur apart from their function in the total whole, which in turn occurs only as the product of these parts in functional relation to a meaningful social environment ("Language as Particle, Wave, and Field").

In the context of this theory of language, Young, Becker, and Pike have devised the series of topics listed on the chart to systematically probe any subject. The student proceeds by going down each column, examining the concept to be explored in the light of the various questions devised for that purpose. For example, if a subject such as civil disobedience were considered from the perspective of the first slot or topic (the particle point of view), the student might be led to define his terms. In considering the second slot (the wave point of view), the student would consider civil disobedience as a process, changing in time over the years, different in its application by Ghandi or Thoreau, or by the students of Kent State. A wave point of view might suggest the topic of contrast, as well as that of process. Finally, in probing the subject from a field perspective (slot 3), the student would view the concept either as a complex entity composed of various parts or as a part of a complex entity. This view suggests the topics of analysis and classification. The reader will notice that by using this heuristic procedure, the student comes up with topics akin to those found in classical rhetoric.

Conscious of a major weakness in the classical concept of arrangement, Young, Becker, and Pike provide the student with two patterns of arrangement, each of which is related to a particular kind of discourse: argumentative discourse and expository discourse. Each of these organizational patterns is listed below in outline form (pp. 234, 237, 238):

Argumentative Discourse

1) Introduction
    a) Direct the reader's attention to the subject or problem.
    b) Explain your experience with the subject, the reasons why you can write with authority.
    c) Establish bridges with the reader by pointing out shared beliefs, attitudes and experiences.
2) Background
    a) Explain the nature of the problem--its history and causes.
    b) Explain its relevance to the reader's problems, desires and interests--the reasons why the problem is important to him.
3) Argument
    a) State the major premise. Include any information that is necessary for making it clear and acceptable.
    b) State the minor premise. Include any information that is necessary for making it clear and acceptable. (It is usually the minor premise that needs the most substantial support. Cite authoritative statements, facts, statistics, personal experiences and experiences of other, and so on.)

        c) State your conclusion.
        d) Demonstrate the superiority of your position by pointing out defects in the premises or inferences of alternative positions. Explain why the alternatives cannot solve the problem; or if they can, why your solution solves it better.
    4) Conclusion
        a) Explain the implications of the argument, such as the benefits to the reader of accepting it and the undesirable consequences of rejecting it.
        b) Summarize your argument: the problem (2a), your conclusion (3c), and the reasons for accepting it (3a and 3b).

Expository Discourse
    1) Introduction
        a) Direct the reader's attention to the subject or problem.
        b) Explain your experience with it.
    2) Background
        a) Explain the nature of the problem--its history and causes.
        b) Explain why the problem is important to the reader.
    3) Thesis and explanation
        a) State the thesis.
        b) Develop it.
    4) Conclusion
        a) Explain the implications (social, philosophical, psychological, and so on) of the information.
        b) Summarize your discussion: the problem (2a), your thesis (3a), and your explanation (3b).

These patterns, like the pattern of arrangement in classical rhetoric, do furnish the student with logical and effective ways of organizing discourse.

The section on style in the Young, Becker, and Pike book is based on the theory of tagmemic grammar. In this view, sentences are composed of slots and fillers which are combined in hierarchical patterns. Thus, for example, the sentence "The sunset attracted my attention," consists of a subject ("the sunset"), a predicate ("attracted"), and an object ("my attention"). The phrase "my attention" contains a headword ("attention") and a modifier ("my"). This phrase is a part of a larger unit, "attracted my attention," which in turn is a unit in the whole. Stylistic choice is a result of the alternatives that can be chosen to fill a respective slot. For example, a sentence pattern may consist of three main slots:

subject   predicate   object

Each slot can be filled with a large set of possible fillers. Thus in the sentence "The sunset attracted my attention," the object slot can be filled by a particular noun phrase :

subject   predicate   object: noun phrase
                                            "my attention"

or by lexical and syntactical alternatives: "his notice," "the scrutiny of the artist." The advantage of this approach to style is that it enables the student to build up fairly complex sentences on the basis of a few movable parts. This approach to style should be viewed as a complement to the classical approach rather than as an alternative.

If classical rhetoric (and the new rhetorics which follow in the classical tradition) presents one fresh approach to the study of writing, then the scholarly schoolroom tradition presents another. One approach, the so called modes of discourse approach, is based on the idea that all writing can be classified on the basis of form. The forms of discourse are usually considered to be the following: exposition, argumentation, narration, and description. Each form supposedly has its own subject matter, its own language, its own function, and its own organizational patterns. Expository writing deals primarily with ideas. Its language is factual and denotative. Its function is to present ideas as clearly and as objectively as possible. Its organizational patterns are logical, the most predominant being analysis and classification. Argumentative writing deals with issues. Its language may be factual (examples, statistics, etc.) or it may be emotive, depending on the kind of appeal (logical, emotional, ethical) being used. Its function is to persuade or convince, to refute or defend a particular issue or point of view. The organizational patterns used in argumentative writing are basically two: induction and deduction. Descriptive writing has as its subject matter the objects of sense experience. Its language may be a combination of the denotative and the connotative, of the objective and the impressionistic. Its function is to evoke sense impressions of people and things. It usually organizes its materials in space and time. And finally, narration is that kind of writing which deals with events as organized in space and time. Like descriptive writing, its language often combines the subjective and the objective, the literal and the figurative. Its function is to tell a story or to narrate an event.

There are differing points of view as to the value of the modes of discourse approach to composition. Some rhetoricians contend that these forms overlap, that it is impossible to have a discourse that is pure in form, that is either exposition, or argumentation, or description, or narration. Some rhetoricians influenced by classical rhetoric avow that there is really one main mode and that one is argumentation. The other modes, they maintain, such as description and narration, are really supportive of argumentation and thus (as in Aristotelian rhetoric) may be subsumed under this mode. Still others argue that although it may be legitimate to conceive of modes of discourse in prose writing as being somehow like genres in literature, we must be more careful in determining the basis of our classification of the basic modes. While many would accept exposition and argumentation as legitimate forms, others would reject description and narration, contending that rather than being modes, these are simply compositional techniques which inform all discourse.

As far as can be determined, Alexander Bain was the first rhetorician to establish the classification of the four modes of discourse which may be found in many textbooks today. Bain's categories, however, included a fifth mode, poetry. According to Bain, the human mind may be divided into three faculties: the understanding, the will and the feelings. Corresponding to these faculties are the three aims of discourse: to inform, to persuade, and to please. The forms of discourse are nothing more than the kinds of composition which relate to these faculties, to the aims of discourse, and more generally to the laws of thought. Description, narration, and exposition, in this view, relate to the faculty of understanding; persuasion relates to the will; and poetry to the feelings.

Other scholars since Alexander Bain have been interested in the forms of discourse approach to writing, yet many are dissatisfied with the traditional classification of these modes. For example, as early as 1914 Sterling Leonard expressed his dissatisfaction in attempting to cope successfully with these modes in the classroom. He writes: "The difficulty I have most often met in attempting to organize such courses has its roots in the present classification of the forms of discourse. For, useful as this doubtless is for sorting completed pieces of writing, it does not view the process of composition from the side of the thoughts or ideas the writer has to express, and particularly of his purpose in expressing these." ("As to the Forms of Discourse," p. 202.) Leonard's reclassification of the forms of discourse is reprinted below (pp. 210-211):

A Scheme ot Reclassification For the Forms of Discourse

I. PRESENTATION OF FACTS

A) Sense-Impressions suggested to give the reader a new and interesting bit of experience: the forms of simple objective narration and description.

B) The same type of material, but chiefly such matters as machines, processes, and so on, stated in order to give the reader useful information, the form of simple explanation.

II. INTERPRETATION OF FACTS

A) Conclusions as to character--mood and motive and so on; and the complications of cause and effect in human action developed into plot: the interpretive forms of narration and description.

B) Generalizations--conclusions as to the relations and the significance of the bodies of fact presented as information in I, B: the forms interpretive expositon and argument.

What Leonard arrives at in his supposed reclassification of the forms of discourse is not a new classification at all, but rather a regrouping and a change in emphasis in the order of presentation of the material for pedagogical purposes. Leonard's avowed purpose is to help his students think clearly: to begin by writing themes based on sense impressions, to explore the material, to analyze and interpret it, and finally to be able to evaluate it and determine its significance.

A more ambitious scheme to reclassify the modes of discourse has been made more recently by Leo Rockas. Rockas' system appears in an abbreviated form as follows (MODES OF RHETORIC, pp. ix-x):

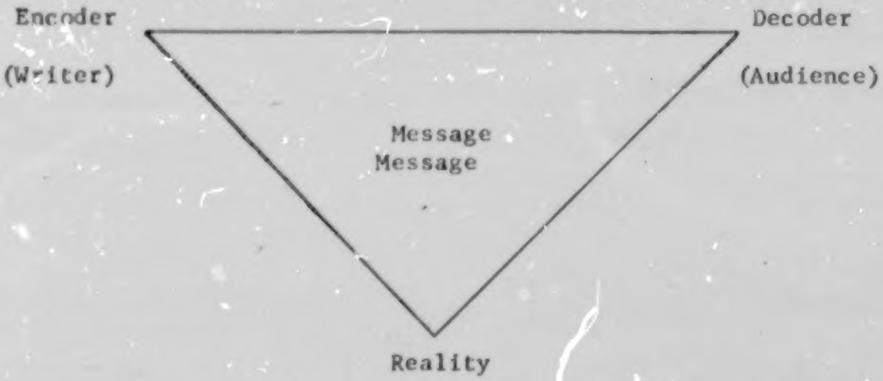
MODES OF RHETORIC

I. The Static Modes
    A. Description
    B. Definition
II. The Temporal Modes
    A. Narration
    B. Process
III. The Mimetic Modes
    A. Drama
    B. Dialogue
IV. The Mental Modes
    A. Reverie
    B. Persuasion

Rockas' goal is certainly noteworthy: to combine the literary modes (drama, epic, lyric) with the rhetorical modes (narration, description, argumentation, exposition) in one grand design. The A categories constitute the concrete modes (description, narration, drama, and reverie), whereas the B categories make up the abstract modes (definition, process, dialogue, and persuasion). Each of these modes is placed into one of four pairs, each pair containing a concrete mode and an abstract mode. The relationship between these seemingly disparate modes is explained by the superordinate categories which subsume each of the pairs: the static, the temporal, the mimetic, and the mental. This scheme suggests that Rockas is on the verge of moving away from a more static concept of the modes of discourse as the products of composition to the more dynamic concept of the modes as processes of the human mind.

Perhaps the most significant approach to the modes of discourse presented in recent years is one articulated by James Kinneavy in a recent book entitled A THEORY OF DISCOURSE. Following Alexander Bain, Kinneavy contends that each mode of discourse corresponds to a different kind of thinking, and that each is related to a different view of reality. Furthermore, the reason for the existence of these modes can be found in the human uses of language and the purposes to which this language is put. Thus Kinneavy is as much concerned with the "aims" of discourse as he is with the "modes" of discourse.

Although Kinneavy's theory of modes derives in part from the aims of discourse, it owes part of its theoretical justification to communications theory. The aims of discourse are based on the four elements of the communications triangle: the encoder (the speaker or writer), the decoder (the audience or reader), the reality (the outer world), and the message (the work itself). Let us consider these elements more carefully in the communications triangle depicted below as a way of describing these modes (pp. 36-38):



The aims of discourse and the modes of discourse are closely connected. If the writer's aim is self-expression, then the emphasis is on the encoder (the writer himself), and the result is expressive discourse. If the writer's aim is to convince or persuade, then the stress is on the decoder (the audience), the reader or listener, and the result is persuasive discourse. If the writer is more concerned with the reality he is trying to convey, then the emphasis is on that reality, or at least on the ideas representing that reality, and the result is referential discourse (exposition). Finally, if the writer is more concerned with the message (the text itself), then the stress is on the internal ordering of the formal characteristics of the text, and the result is literature. These four modes--the expressive, the persuasive, the referential, and the literary--constitute the basic forms of discourse.

Expressive discourse includes such forms as diaries, journals, prayers, conversations, gripe sessions, protests, proposals, and the like. Referential discourse may be subdivided into three subcategories: exploratory discourse, panel discussions, interviews, and questionnaires. Scientific discourse embodies literary criticism, history, taxonomic categories, and descriptive analysis. Informative discourse includes weather reports, news stories, conversations, textbooks, encyclopedia articles, and summaries. Literary discourse, the fourth basic mode, admits of such forms as puns, jokes, songs, the genres of literature, the limerick, and the T.V. drama. At its best, the modes of discourse approach to writing forces us to attend more closely to the aims of discourse and to the uses of language and organizational patterns attendant on these aims. At its weakest, it may develop into a mere formalism, with undue emphasis on the characteristics of the forms of discourse, rather than with a more proper emphasis on the processes of discourse. And, as has often been pointed out, ordinarily a composition is a mixture of such forms. For example, a discussion of argumentation (or persuasive discourse) will almost inevitably lead to a discussion of the referential or expository elements in such discourse. Similarly, any discussion of referential discourse will undoubtedly take into account the importance of the descriptive and narrative elements in such discourse.

I have previously mentioned that fresh and viable ideas for the study of writing can still be obtained from classical rhetoric and from the scholarly schoolroom tradition. New ideas are currently being obtained from other sources, but it would be difficult to classify these ideas under a single heading. One new model proposed for the study of composition has been set forth by Robert Zoellner, who offers a model based on the principles derived from behavioral psychology. Zoellner begins by criticizing what he calls the think-write metaphor unconsciously adopted by English teachers. This metaphor, Zoellner states, "asserts that the written word is thought on paper. In slightly different terms, it equates the act of thought with the act of writing in the sense that the scribal stream 'symbolizes' both vocal utterance and the thought which generates it" ("Talk-Write: A behavioral Pedagogy for Composition," p. 267) In our textbooks and in our classrooms, we burden our students with vague notions about thinking, logic, organization of ideas, and the like. We concentrate on the written word while we ignore the act of writing. This emphasis on the think-write metaphor, contends Zoellner, is too exclusively mentalistic, ignoring as it does important behavioral considerations in the act of writing. Rather than concentrating almost exclusively on internal events, we ought to be focusing on observable, external events. Zoellner presents this last point rather forcefully:

> It is precisely at this point that behavioral psychotherapy, with its clinical methodologies derived from operant learning principles, opens up new directions for the development of a radically different compositional pedagogy. Its suggestiveness for the teacher of English resides in one incandescent, lucidly simple fact: it shifts the locus of methodological attention from the inner activity of the organism, which is invisible and empirically inaccessible to the outer activity of the organism, which is visible and empirically observable. It does not necessarily deny the existence of thought or various other kinds of inner states: it simply faces the fact that the interior life of the organism is beyond our effective reach. Consequently it directs its efforts, not to the establishment of right thinking, but rather of right behaving (p. 289).

It is almost impossible to do justice to Zoellner's arguments in these few short pages. The reader is invited to explore these arguments more fully in the original article. What concerns us here are the principles which Zoellner derives from behavioral psychology and which he would have us apply in the composition classroom. As outlined by Zoellner, these principles are the following:

(1) Concentration on the act of writing, rather than on the artifactual written word.
(2) Pedagogical exploitation of the verbal repertory, both vocal and scribal, which the student possesses as he enters the classroom.
(3) A classroom environment so structured as to permit innumerable scribal responses, rather than just a few.
(4) A pedagogical situation which permits more or less immediate reinforcement of those aspects of the individual's scribal activity which represents functional improvement.
(5) A classroom technique for developing chained sub-specifications of acceptable scribal activity geared to the capabilities of the individual student, with "bullseye" or "I've-caught-you-off-base" teaching reduced to a minimum (p. 296).

These principles manifest themselves in such specific practices as getting the student to talk before he writes, and then having him transcribe his talking into writing; having the student observe the teacher in the act of writing, and then having the teacher observe the student in a similar process. The value of the first activity is that it directly relates writing activity to vocal activity and probes the connections between the two. The values of the second activity are two-fold: the student can profit from observing the teacher as model and from being able to receive immediate reinforcement for his own scribal act.

Criticisms of Zoellner's talk-write approach to composition are numerous. Some critics would remind Zoellner that from its beginnings in ancient Greece, rhetoric was talk, and that most teachers are aware of the close relationship that exists between speech and writing. Other critics maintain that, despite this close relationship, to insist that the best pedagogical position is one which consists of turning speech into writing is to confuse the two modes. Since speech and writing are both distinct symbol systems, why go from one symbol system to another rather than directly from thought to writing? In addition, many teachers deny that students talk better than they write. Student speech, they say, is often fuzzy, fragmented, repetitious, unorganized, and cliche-ridden. Students need as much practice in learning how to engage in well structured and meaningful oral discourse as they do in learning how to structure their writing. Another charge by Zoellner's critics is that he concentrates too much on the superficial, motor aspects of writing. Writing, they contend, is much more than motor activities that result in filling a paper with print. It should be directly related to private, hidden mental processes. Finally, some critics claim that the kinds of classroom activities that Zoellner suggests are lacking in usefulness. The writing of essays is more than the simplistic process of reinforcing good sentences and paragraphs; it is a complex process involving the writer's purpose, his audience, his choice of subject matter, his organization, and his style.

Whereas Zoellner's approach to the study of composition is based on behavorial psychology, at least one interesting new approach is based on the findings of Gestalt psychology. Books which use this approach are called perception readers. Representative of this kind of text is Fred Morgan's HERE AND NOW: AN APPROACH TO WRITING THROUGH PERCEPTION. Morgan's basic premise is that "good writing grows organically out of good thinking, and that good thinking must begin with the materials of immediate experience. Accurate and well-integrated perception of the self and of the environment is primary." (Preface). Morgan's title as well as many of his ideas seem to derive from ideas adapted from GESTALT THERAPY, by Frederick Perls, Ralph Hefferline, and Paul Goodman. Gestalt psychology provides the focal point for the method of the book which is to apply the Gestalt outlook to modern psychotherapy. The Gestalt outlook is

> the original, undistorted, natural approach to life; that is, to man's thinking, acting, feeling. The average person, having been raised in an atmosphere full of splits, has lost his Wholeness, his Integrity. To come together again he has to heal the dualism of his person, of his thinking, and of his language. He is accustomed to thinking of contrasts--of infantile and mature, of body and mind, organism and environment, self and reality, as if they were opposing entities. The unitary outlook which can dissolve such a dualistic approach is buried but not destroyed and. . .can be regained with wholesome advantage (GESTALT THERAPY, viii).

This natural approach to life can be recaptured by a greater awareness of objects, people, events, and ideas, and especially of the self as a biological and social being. The process whereby one can achieve this goal is continuous and life-long. It involves contact with the environment, sensing, excitation, and Gestalt formation. Gestalt formation is of the utmost importance because only through this approach can the elements of experience by organized into a meaningful whole. A comparison of the partial table of contents of GESTALT THERAPY with that of HERE AND NOW reveals the extent of Morgan's indebtedness to current psychological theory:

GESTALT THEORY

- I. The Starting Situation
- II. Contacting the Environment
  - Experiment 1: Feeling the Actual
  - Experiment 2: Sensing Opposed Forces
  - Experiment 3: Attending and Concentrating
  - Experiment 4: Differentiating and Unifying
- III. Technique of Awareness
  - Experiment 5: Remembering
  - Experiment 6: Sharpening the Body-Sense
  - Experiment 7: Experiencing the Continuity of Emotion
  - Experiment 8: Verbalizing
  - Experiment 9: Integrating Awareness
- IV. Directed Awareness
  - Experiment 10: Converting Confluence into Contact
  - Experiment 11: Changing Anxiety into Excitement

HERE AND NOW

introduction
1
perceiving objects
2
perceiving the immediate environment
3
perceiving emotional attitudes
4
perceiving thoughts
5
extending awareness
6
observing a person
7
evaluating possessions
8
evaluating a person
9
identifying with a person
10
looking at a custom
11
examining a goal
12
looking at an institution
13
reliving a past experience
14
searching for meaning

The object of this comparison is not merely to show the extent of Morgan's indebtedness (this would be unfair to Morgan who has made creative use of his source material by adapting, modifying, and adding to it for his own purposes), but to show the extent to which many rhetoricians and teachers of composition are interested in basing new theories and approaches to composition on what to them seem viable psychological principles.

There are undoubtedly other recent approaches to composition which connect in some way to viable psychological theories. It is difficult, however, to try to draw a direct cause and effect relationship between these theories and the newer ideas incomposition. Nevertheless, implicit in some of these approaches one may find traces of psychological concepts. For example, the emphasis on creative expression and on personal writing in Great Britain and the United States seems to derive at least in part from Freudian and Jungian psychology and from humanistic and existential approaches to human behavior by such psychologists as Rollo May, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and R.D. Laing. The importance of these new approaches is that they offer interesting alternatives to the tradition, rational approaches which have long dominated the classroom. These new approaches emphasize feelings and emotions rather than preconceived ideas; creativity, fantasy, the imagination, dreams, play, free association, the stream-of-consciousness, and the self.

Characteristic of these new approaches to writing are such titles as A.B. Clegg, THE EXCITEMENT OF WRITING; John Dixon, GROWTH THROUGH ENGLISH; David Holbrook, ENGLISH FOR THE REJECTED; Ken Macrorie, TELLING WRITING, UPTAUGHT, and WRITING TO BE READ; James E. Miller, WORD, SELF, REALITY: THE RHETORIC OF IMAGINATION; and Geoffrey Summerfield, ed., CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH.

The teacher's role in directing such writing is similar to that of a psychotherapist. The job of the teacher is to make it easier for the student to communicate his feelings and emotions. The teacher therefore is completely trusting, accepting the student's writing with all of its imperfections as a direct reflection of his feelings and self-worth. This new emphasis on writing which is relatively free of direction and control may be labeled "the new romanticism." It holds that not all of our mental processes are rational. It denies that the intellect is more in touch with reality than the imagination or feelings and emotions. As James Miller puts it:

> The mystery of language is, in large part, the mystery of the processes of the imagination; indeed, language and imagination are so closely intertwined that it would be impossible to untangle them. Probably there is no use of language that does not involve some part of the imagination. And, conversely, the imagination no doubt finds some of its finest manifestations in language. For too long the assumption has been made that language used by an individual originates in the orderly processes of his rational mind, in his reason, in his faculty of systematic logic. Instruction in language-use has therefore been largely aimed at this logical faculty, in the belief that the teaching of orderly processes will result in good writing. The result, though, has too often been not good writing but dead writing, obedient to all the inhibitions and restraints drilled into the reason, but generally dehumanized and unreadable (pp. 3-4).

How does one write according to this view? "Forget all rules, forget all restrictions as to taste, as to what ought to be said, write for the pleasure of it--whether slowly or fast--every form of resistance to a complete release should be abondoned" (William Carlos Williams, "How to Write," quoted in WORD, SELF, REALITY, p. 67). Students can write meaningful prose only if they are allowed complete freedom to assert their selves, their world views. Such "natural" writing, as it has come to be called, is deeply rooted in our instinctive nature. This natural and spontaneous view of writing has been espoused by British educators such as John Dixon who writes:

> In such personal writing, as it has come to be called, the teacher is looking for an effort to achieve insight--to brush aside the everpresent invitation to take the world as other people have found it, adopting ready-made their terms and phrases (their image of us). Writing is a way of building a personal world and giving an individual rather than a stereotyped shape to our day-by-day experience. Personal writing has to take feeling as well as thought into account, attitudes as well as observations. Characteristically it uses prose as an undifferentiating matrix that blends discussion of ideas with the sense of felt experience. In this way, then, this is a starting point to which we continually recur ("Creative Expression in Great Britain," p. 797).

A final source of new ideas for the composition classroom is a group of textbooks which seem to have been influenced by the ideas of Marshall McLuhan. These books have been termed "Multi-Media" textbooks. McLuhan's thesis in UNDERSTANDING MEDIA is that the age of technology has created an electronically configurated world, a world of change and fluidity, a world in which simultaneity and total integration threaten to make our rational, linear, printed-oriented culture obsolete. What McLuhan's ideas seem to suggest for the composition classroom is that imaging and free association processes are more valuable in the writing process than sequential orderly processes.

These new textbooks in their formats deliberately try to subvert and to circumvent the more traditional logical arrangements, to place more emphasis on juxtaposition and montage than on a linear order. For example, Sparke and McKowen's MONTAGE: INVESTIGATIONS IN LANGUAGE has no traditional introduction and no table of contents. Rather than being printed in the traditional black type, it has psychedelic lettering in red, pink and green colors. Questions, puns, and seemingly irrelevant comments are juxtaposed with pictures and cartoons of various kinds to shock the reader into making some sense of the apparent confusion. Since the mind necessarily seeks closure, the reader finds himself imposing his own meanings, his own interpretations, and his own structure on the text. The result is that the imagination is stimulated to produce a new kind of writing.

MIXED BAG, by Helene Hutchinson, is similarly organized. Graffiti, cartoons, photographs, advertisements, poems, stories, and essays are placed together in such fashion that new ideas and associations are constantly being formed by the reader. The colors used for the photographs, the paintings, and the letter are equally as bold in this book as in MONTAGE. Other mixed-media books which are based upon similar lines are JUXTAPOSITION, by James Hogins and Gerald Bryant; MULTIMEDIATE, by Warren Clare and Kenneth J. Ericksen; SOS, by Marlene Ahrne and Sara Burgess; IMAGE, by Clark McKowen; and WORLDS IN THE MAKING: PROBES FOR STUDENTS OF THE FUTURE, by Mary Dunstan and Patricia W. Garlan.

There are undoubtedly many other new approaches to the study of rhetoric and composition. Most notable among those I have not mentioned is the approach to the sentence and the paragraph by Francis Christensen in NOTES TOWARD A NEW RHETORIC. But Christensen's ideas have been so widely disseminated that it seems redundant to go into them here. The approaches alluded to in this paper seem to me to be the most promising of the new approaches, but I have necessarily had to engage in a great amount of selectivity.

What are the implications of these approaches for the study of composition in the high school? Unfortunately, there are few high school textbooks which have incorporated the insights of classical rhetoric or of the new rhetorics. But teachers on all levels can hardly afford to wait for the newest textbooks to begin the important task of getting our students to discover meaning in their writing and in the universe around them. Clearly, much more attention needs to be paid to invention. And students can profit greatly from the stylistic categories of classical rhetoric. That these categories and the aspects of style that they symbolize are still viable can be readily ascertained by looking at recent examples of discourse such as John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" that use these figures for rhetorical purposes. The forms of discourse approach, I feel, is a neglected area of concern. We pay much more attention to literary genres than we do to the forms which are in constant use in our everyday lives, in our newspapers, our magazines, and on television. Finally, approaches to writing which emphasize the imagination, the feelings, and the free interplay of the senses are much needed to offset the more traditional, rational classroom approaches. Nearly everyone has the capacity for imaginative and emotional development. The English classroom is one important environment where such development can take place.

The teaching of writing in the schools, in my opinion, has been greatly neglected. In some instances, it is no longer a major part of the high school curriculum. In other instances, writing is still being assigned, but it is seldom being taught adequately. However, it is not too late to make a new start. Renewed by the insights of classical rhetoric, the scholarly schoolroom tradition, and other sources, the teacher can bring to the study of writing a new vitality. Hopefully, some of the ideas derived from these new sources will provide a steady, guiding light for teachers to follow and will not, nova-like, burst into brilliance for a brief period only to fade away into obscurity in a few months or years.

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"EXPERIENCE IN AWARENESS"
AN INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING

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"This has been a pretty fun year," commented Bob Kreyzewski, one of my Junior English students, in response to a class that had begun as Junior English and ended as "An Experience in Awareness." There had been no alternative that year. It was 1969 in Illinois and this class, whose specialty was protest, had already disposed of one genteel English teacher. I had no wish to be the next.

Therefore, one Friday morning I scheduled a class meeting as a part of our English class. This meeting became the first of our Friday Forums for planning and evaluation. I listened to complaints about the English program: "Stupid exercises year after year," "Boring textbooks," "Talkative teachers." Somehow these students were not getting the message from the media. We would have to adjust the media if we were to communicate. So, as a survival tactic for all of us, I asked permission to experiment with a course in writing related to life, a course in which the students would have a vital part in planning. As direct participation in sources of writing sharpened our perceptions, we launched out on one of the most exciting discoveries, our potential to communicate in speaking, in writing, in film, in music and in the graphic arts. What had begun as challenge, became "An Experience in Awareness."

This course, developed more fully with the help of the English department and students at Bourgade High School, Phoenix, has become an introductory course in a curriculum for Creative Writing. The main purpose of this one semester course is to motivate students to want to write by becoming aware of creative sources within themselves, in one another, and in the world around them, and to share their perceptions in vital language. Underlying this purpose is the teacher's faith in the potential for creativity in each student, his power to communicate in some way something unique. This implicit trust in the student helps to create an atmosphere where ideas can surface. These ideas are contagious. And once there is an epidemic of creative thinking, there is no problem motivating creative writing.

Any writer needs time for reflection on and observation of the world around him. George Kneller in the ART AND SCIENCE OF CREATIVITY notes that the creative process has four generally recognizable phases; preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. In organizing classes for "Experience in Awareness," I have attempted to recognize these phases of creativity which, though logically separate, are rarely so distinct in experience. With preparation and incubation in mind, we stress the eastern concept of working "in time" rather than "on time." Yet, we attempt to have major projects on time for major evaluations, deadlines. We spend much prewriting time in observations of nature, people, the world around us. In this sense, the campus is really our classroom. We take time to read passages from the great works of literature or poetry. While the classroom must be alive with books and magazines, the book which teaches us to write by writing is the journal. We write in the journals everyday; observations, feelings, comments on school and national events, favorite quotations, and first drafts of assignments. Though we have long and short assignments, we do not have homework. Rather we work at home on projects that we have begun in class and want to work on at home. Anyone working on something creative does not notice the time passing. He is working now, "in time," enjoying his work and the work is the better for his enjoyment. To keep the idea of enjoyment before the student, we play games in class such as word association games from Story Workship, Columbia College, Chicago. We write, put in cold storage, and rewrite, having available for each student dictionaries, Roget's THESAURUS, and Writing Handbooks.

The function of the teacher in this type of class is to direct, to assist, to provide a warm encouraging atmosphere of acceptance. I have found that such an atmosphere helps to promote an internal environment for creativity; a state of consciousness relaxed enough to let the unconscious sources of writing emerge, taut enough to produce a creative awareness that will result in art. It is something like strings of a violin; if too tightly tuned, they screech or even break; if too loosely strung, they will not be able to produce music. Therefore, in addition to listening creatively, the teacher criticizes constructively and teaches the students to do so. I do the major part of criticism in conference with the student. Often, at this time, the student will perceive his own need for techniques of the craft and begin to see some connection between the "stupid exercises" and his own composition. For individual or small group instruction in techniques, I use Eyegate Films on paragraph structure, revision, tips for short stories, any that are relevant to the situation, and a variety of texts from Harcourt Brace series, DOMAINS IN LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION. If the student understands from the beginning that it will be impossible for him to fail this course in creativity (the short, period-contained assignments and journal entries insure a minimum amount of writing from each student), that he will receive "A", "B", or "C" (or preferably a "Pass" or "Fail") for the semester, the constricting pressure of grades is removed and he is free to create.

Some students respond immediately to this type of program and produce work that surprises themselves. Others will take the semester before they begin to produce. Then, in the last week they might decide to write a "book." (They might not know the difference between a novel or a short story, but a "book" is the aim.) The teacher will be wise not to smile to herself, but to encourage the production. For instance, Richard Doria of that 1969 class said in his last paper, "Sister, this is my last homeworker (sic) assignment. The reason being that I'll be doing research on carnival life all summer. I promise you this; TOMMY will be printed. It will be good." I have no doubt that it will be. Richard has just sent me his first book of poems and has had plays produced by his college. In 1969 Richard's scores on NEDT and SAT were below his grade level. In 1973 Richard can plan for a career in writing. As he says, "I can't think of anything I'd rather do."

Practically, how do we achieve this motivation. Begin with lessons, short, contained within one class period, that will allow the students to be at ease with themselves, the instructor, and one another and to experience some success. For instance, after the introductory class, where many ideas on the nature of writing can be evoked in student-oriented discussion by asking such simple questions as Why?, Where?, What do you write about?, ask the students to write some of their ideas on the nature of the writing problem. Mimeograph a quotation from each student for class discussion on the next day.

Since teacher and class are still getting acquainted, ask the students to draw a self-portrait, something like the draw-a-man test of the first grade. Just make sure that students understand that this is not an intelligence test. It would be invalid at their age. Make it a fun time. Nobody has to write a thing; nobody, least of all the teacher, is a professional artist. To convince the students, the teacher might attempt a sketch of himself on the blackboard. When the sketches are finished, ask the students to write their names on the back. Then, if the class is small enough, have a guess-who game. This is a good way of getting acquainted and most beginning classes should center on that. Students will feel free to read what they write in a class where they are at home with one another. Only in such a class will students benefit from a constructive evaluation of their work.

Another variation of the identification games could be writing paragraphs in which the student describes his own or some other student's face. The teacher should attempt to do this himself before asking the student to do so. He will then understand the difficulties involved. He might even discover that he is not sure of what he himself looks like. First, ask the students to list the different features on their faces; mouth, nose, eyes, eyebrows. Then ask them to describe each feature as graphically as possible. Stress details of shape and color. Once they have assembled the details, then choose a point of view, from forehead to chin or chin to forehead or beginning with the most outstanding feature and write the paragraph. Again the students can play another guess-who game. Usually by the end of this lesson, teacher and students are fairly well acquainted. The preparation stage for creativity has begun.

After the initial classes which center on getting acquainted, the teacher attempts to stimulate an impulse to create. One way of doing this is to lead the students into a little play with the unconscious. The students have enjoyed a class that we call the Doodle Game. We choose a record that suggests an atmosphere: "Sounds of Silence," "Spanish Music," "The Sea." Give the students a big sheet of paper and some colored felt pens. Ask them to doodle as they listen to the record. They can doodle as much as they want all over the one side of the paper. After five minutes, ask them to look at their doodling, try to feel the mood that it expresses, then turn the paper over and sketch any type of design or scene that the music suggests. Then, collect the papers and without revealing names, discuss the moods that the doodles suggest and comment on the better sketches. In this way, students who are good at art but not so good at writing, receive attention and encouragement.

The next lesson develops from the art period. Again, play a record that suggests an atmosphere. Tell the students to jot down any words that the music suggests. Then ask them to feel the mood that the words suggest and try to write a sketch of their mood as fast as they can for the next fifteen minutes. Stress that they do not have to worry about spelling or usage at this point. Just write ideas as fast as they come. Some students will write stories that are intensely imaginative. Some will write reflections or poems such as Faith Risolo wrote about the waves:

> Waves remind me of people.
> Some are strong and straight-forward.
> Others are slow and sloppy.
> And others are the type that
> Baptize and drench other people
> With the salt water of gloom.

Again, share the results of this lesson with the class before the end of the period. Stress only positive qualities of the student's writing. The students enjoy making bulletin boards using their doodles, art, and writing from these beginning lessons.

About this time, begin using the journal for daily writing. Until the students learn the knack of keeping a journal, give them ideas about what to write; daily observations, what makes them angry, what makes them sad, how they react to report cards. Charles Teach read a poignant sentence to me from his journal concerning report cards:

> Sometimes kids use report cards like a hand in poker seeing who has the better hand. But in this poker game there are no

bets, and in this game a kid could be shot down by laughter,
for he had a poor hand.

The teacher never corrects the journal. He just checks to see that the student is keeping it. If he, himself, keeps a journal, he can share ideas from his and the students find this helpful. Also, he can share his attitude of respect for what he writes in this journal.

Towards the end of the first quarter we begin "timed writing;" writing fast and furiously for ten minutes on any topic. We increase the time gradually as the days go on. Soon the students come in asking for longer timed writing periods.

Entries in the journal can be inspired by observation classes outside the classroom. Begin with the sense of sight. Take a walk around the campus pausing at designated stations to jot down what can be seen; objects, colors, shapes. Take some quiet time under a tree where students can write how they feel at that moment. In subsequent classes, teach simple forms of poetry; the cinquain, the more complicated haiku, and free verse as a way of summing up outdoor impressions. A variation of this outdoor observation class is to have each student choose a particular object to describe and after observing details of the object to respond in a simile or imaginative poem. Sally Tomchak reflected on a blade of grass:

perhaps each
blade
    of grass is a (maybe)
    castle filled
    with knights and ladies
    and royal painters
    who (with tiny comeout everyday brushes)
    comeout everyday
    and paint
    chlorophyll green
    the castles

Candy Driscoll chose a Lady Bug:

Ladybug, ladybug,
Don't fly away home.
Your children are gone
To live with a gnome
Under a toadstool
By the oak tree;
Ladybug, ladybug
Stay here with me.

Another variation of the outdoor class is to use a polaroid camera to snap pictures of students with their chosen objects. They enjoy the instant results and often take off on a story inspired by the picture.

The third or fourth outdoors class can be effective in teaching physical point of view. Ask students to form groups and assign them in two groups to a station; one group on the first floor, the other group directly above on the second floor. Ask them to jot down what they see from their respective points of view.

Walking around the school with a tape recorder catching sounds not ordinarily heard can be an effective way of making the students aware of sounds. They can be surprised, as can the teacher, by the bird chatter outside the classroom.

Tim Andrade introduced the following idea for observations of sound. Let a student take the tape recorder around the school. Then let him play the tape in class and ask the other students to try to trace his path by just listening to the sounds.

Indoor observation classes can be used to develop awareness of the senses of taste, smell, touch. Surprise the students with fruit drops or peppermint drops some day. Let them write down words to describe the taste. Ask them to bring chocolate bars. They chew, reflect, write words what would make someone else taste the chocolate bar. Another tasting day can center on fruit salad; apples, oranges or lemons. The food classes are very popular with the students and can lead into other classes in which the sense of smell is stressed; the smell of lemon cologne sprays compared with fresh lemon. From the observation class, the students can launch into a short autobiographical composition, "I remember the smell of. . ."

To develop the sense of touch, the students close their eyes and feel the surfaces inside the classroom and outside. They attempt to identify objects in a brown bag. The trust-walk of sensitivity fame is also a valuable experience in becoming aware of sounds and surfaces and mutual trust.

To culminate the observation classes, we have a scavenger hunt to bring back as many words as possible to describe observations around the school. The students discover the tropical fish in the principal's office, the vivid colors in the Dean's office or the wind music in the trees. Another way of culminating the observation classes is to have the students list five things which they consider beautiful. Then ask them to complete the sentence, "Beauty is. . ." When they have had time to reflect and prepare the sentence, then tape their thoughts on beauty. "Beauty is vision on a clear day from the sky," says Archie Taylor, a student-pilot. "Beauty is warm chicken soup when you're hungry, cold milk to wash down crisp saltine crackers. Beauty is the warm full feeling of content that replaces near starvation," says Nancy Riekhoff.

For variation in the program and to show the student wider sources of material to write about, as well as artistic principles of composition, introduce a Culture Crazy Day. Slides of great paintings, scores of Bach and Beethoven, sculptures, any mini-study of the Fine Arts can give material for this day. This year we are using Scholastic ARTS AND MAN for Culture Crazy Day. Students can also contribute their ideas. For instance, Beth Wenzel and Sally Tomchak brought in a stack of EEG paper from the nearest hospital. They stretched it out across the tables and asked the students to choose crayons to make a crayon mural to symphonic music. If the students wanted to add poems, reflections, or thoughts to the mural, they were free to do so. A fine variation of the Culture Crazy Day was provided by two boys, John Cox and Mike Wiedmaier who photographed a Jeep Trip to the mountains and then set the slides to music.

The observation classes and Culture Crazy Days help to prepare the creative atmosphere for preparation and incubation of ideas. The illumination and verification can be a part of the projects that students contract to do. They choose a written project each quarter based on the Scholastic Creative Writing Awards categories of writing, and adapted to the student's ability. Students write short stories, collections of poems, informal articles. Once the student has decided upon a category, he joins other students who are working in the same category for instruction on technique. Meanwhile, we will have had some shorter writing assignments; setting up interviews with other students in the class or other teachers in the school and then writing a profile or short biography of the other person, writing essays of opinion developing from class discussions of current topics.

One very successful method of giving immediate response to student projects and motivating best work is to have a project reading day. Students bring in their projects on a day agreed to beforehand. They clip a blank sheet of paper to the front of the project for comments. We form a circle, choose projects to read silently. After reading each project the student makes a comment on the evaluation sheet using the very simple formula, "What is good about the paper?" "Do you have any suggestions for improving it?" This individualized reading period passes quickly and the students are eager to see the comments on their papers. The comments, together with the teacher's response in conference, help the student to build an attitude of respect for what he writes.

Two other assignments which high school students enjoy are making a poetry anthology and bringing Something Creative to class. The student can be as original as he wants in presenting his anthology. Mobiles, collages, illustrated by photographs or pictures from magazines or the student's own art are among the productions received. The only requirement is to have ten poems by any author or authors. When the students bring in the anthologies, we have a poetry reading day. The responses to such a day can be an inspiration to a teacher.

The students especially like the "Something Creative Day." They bring in all sorts of interesting crafts, hobbies, collections, everything from motor cycles to upholstery for their cars. Since this day is one of celebration of our creative abilities, we also have pizza, brownies and fruit punch. Students who have academic difficulties often excel on days like this and give the teacher a clue to interests.

Through this wide variety of classes, the teacher hopes to provide for the phases of creativity. The preparation which includes the impulse to create is a rather lengthy period in which the student gathers his material and investigates different methods of handling it. Then, as George Kneller points out, comes the time for incubation in which the work of creation proceeds unconsciously. This is followed by the moment of illumination in which the unconscious mind suddenly, or not so suddenly, announces the results of its labors in a first draft. Finally, there is the process of revision in which the work is elaborated, altered, or corrected.

By stressing this creative process, the teacher can motivate the students to want to write by becoming aware of their own creative resources. Then, not only the studentts, but also the teacher can enjoy an "Experience in Awareness," exciting, fulfilling, and always a challenge to create more. As John Barnes said in his quarterly evaluation of the class:

> In this class I have learned to write. And when I came in I really didn't care about writing. I hated poetry and now I like it. The Character sketch I did on Tim surprised me. I am very proud of it and still can't believe that it is my work.

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STAND UP AND CHEER FOR GRUBBY PROSE

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Last summer I received the following essay from a Kansas State University freshman:

> Choosing a college to attend is a difficult and serious task and one that should meet the personal needs of the prospective student.
>
> Thus, the most difficult task for me has been choosing the sized college I wish to attend. There are numerous advantages to attending a large university as well as a small college, however in my case the small college goes the furthest in meeting my personal academic needs.
>
> The advantages of a small college include a low student to teacher ratio, academic facilities and physical setting appropriate to its size and character, the abundance of quality text materials and audio-visual aids, and the personal rapport with fellow classmates and instructors.
>
> The advantages of a low student to teacher ratio are more personal attention resulting in many cases, in better grades and a broader understanding of the subjects being studied.
>
> The academic facilities and physical setting can also be advantageous to enhancing the academic atmosphere as maintenance and upkeep on buildings and classrooms tends to be performed to a greater extent due to a lower maintenance expenses evolving from fewer buildings on campus.
>
> Still another advantage is the abundance of quality text material and audio-visual aids. This advantage is seen in the fact that less students are using reference materials making them more available for everyone.
>
> Finally, the last important advantage of a small college is the personal rapport among the students and with the faculty enabling a more casual constructive atmosphere. Simply, classmates are more willing to intersperse and help each other because they know each other.
>
> For these reasons, I feel that a smaller college suits my educational desires to a greater degree than would a larger university.

Fifteen years ago I would have assaulted this paper confidently and without mercy. For example, paragraph one has an absurdity; the structure of the sentence suggests that the task should meet the needs of a student and prompts one to wonder whether or not this student has any other tasks lying around to meet student needs. Paragraph two offers "sized," a comma fault, lack of comma after "however," and wooden organization. In paragraph five, I find some Engfish: "The academic facilities and physical setting can also be advantageous to enhancing (?) the academic atmosphere as maintenance and upkeep on buildings and classrooms tends to be performed to a greater extent due to a lower maintenance expenses evolving from fewer buildings on campus." There is an idea wedged in that tortured prose somewhere. The writer is trying to say two things: (1) students do better work in pleasant physical surroundings; (2) the buildings and grounds of a small college are better kept up than those of a large university because there are fewer to take care of and the cost of maintaining them is lower. She seems not to have considered the possibility that a university hires more people and spends more money keeping up its physical plant. Her seventh paragraph has more Engfish: "enabling a more casual constructive atmosphere." It is difficult to believe that a native speaker of English could produce that construction. The student then concludes the paragraph with another gem: "Simply, classmates are more willing to intersperse and help each other because they know each other." That one is a good companion for a construction a socially frustrated foreign student once produced. He wanted to attend more functions where he could participate in girls.

Scarcely anything can be said for the organization or arguments of this paper. The organization is a variant of the hoary, rigid, five paragraph essay. The introduction, summary of arguments to be presented, one paragraph allotment per argument, and meaningless summary are all here. Only one of the arguments, the first, has a prayer of being valid, and as most persons know, some university curricula offer extremely low student to teacher ratios. The second argument is absurd. A university's academic facilities and physical setting are as appropriate to its size as those of the small college are. The third argument is false; surely, she does not believe that the small college has greater resources in texts and audio-visual aids than a tax-supported school with infinitely more money for buying them? Her last argument is unoriginal and possibly specious.

I am suggesting, of course, that had I hovered over this paper like an Aztec priest at a blood sacrifice, I would have framed arguments, thoroughly unoriginal organization, and stylistic absurdities in red ink and given the student the F she so richly deserved. I say I _would_ have done that years ago, but I did not do it last summer because I realized that these surface weaknesses were only symptoms of a much more serious problem. This student has, in Robert Zoellner's terms, an advanced case of "schizokinetic scribophobia." The term, which first appeared in Mr. Zoellner's now famous monograph, "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy for Composition," _College English_, January 1969, is explained by him: "My own experience suggests that if the average student can write only in banalities and generalities it is because, somewhere along the line, the act of writing has become entirely dissociated from both reality itself, and from whatever verbal-vocal 'voice' the student may have developed in coping with that reality. . . Students have learned that in the writing situation they do not have to say anything real . . . Such students, trained to write pasteurized and depersonalized prose, are very resentful of the college English instructor who likes his ideas all grubby and covered with veritable bacteria." (p. 306) This kind of writing in good students Zoellner calls a "tragic proficiency in writing _words-for-teacher_ as opposed to _words-for-me_." (p. 307)

How, you may wonder, was I so sure that I had properly diagnosed this student's problem? I assure you that it was not difficult at all. In the first place, I had told students in the class that they could write on any subject they chose. Some found that much freedom overpowering, so I suggested that they try to establish some link between the readings we were doing then (Section I of Cherry, Conley, and Hirsch's A RETURN TO VISION, the general subject of which was the chaos and spiritual emptiness of modern life) and their personal experience. Nothing in the book remotely suggested a topic comparing the university and the small college. Therefore, I reasoned that this student had defined her own topic: the problem of choosing between the small college and the big one. But her knowledge of the small college's advantages was derived from one campus visit and the school's catalog; her knowledge of Kansas State University came from one week's attendance at the summer session. The organizational triteness and manufactured arguments of the paper strongly suggested that she simply did not know what she was talking about. So why had she chosen such a topic? I put a note on her paper to see me, but she did not respond and turned in, the following week, an essay discussing ways that death might be explained to young children. It was scarcely a human document. It read very much like a set of instructions for assembling a bicycle. I made some rather harsh observations on that paper, and she finally came to see me. I then asked her a number of questions: did she have younger brothers and sisters to whom she had had to explain the significance of death? No. Did she have nephews or nieces or the children of friends to whom she had had to talk about this subject? No. Had her mother or father died when she was very young, and had some adult talked with her openly and sympathetically on the subject? No. Then why had she written on the topic at all? The explanation which followed, accompanied by a steady flow of tears, was that she had been taught never to interject herself into her writing. In other words, write on neutral subjects and never use the personal pronoun I. The consequence of this was that she had, literally, dissociated the act of writing from anything real in her experience. Schizokinetic scribophobia--full blown and well advanced.

I have belabored this point at some length because I believe it is central to our approach to the problem of teaching composition. Historically, we have had an abundance of methods and paradigms, most of them ineffective. Some of these methods have been with us from the beginning of freshman composition courses in the late nineteenth century: teaching by the use of prose models; stress on unity, coherence, and emphasis; the forms of discourse, narration, description, exposition, and argument; the paragraph as theme in miniature. Many of these concepts originated with Barrett Wendall of Harvard. Harvard's program was also responsible for the emphasis on "correctness" in writing which caused heavy stress on the teaching of grammar and sentence diagramming for the first part of this century. Albert Kitzhaber, who records this history in his doctoral dissertation, RHETORIC IN AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1850-1900, reports that the study of grammar as a means of improving composition was discredited by 1930; he is much too optimistic. That may have been true among the avant garde, but I still get students who have been drilled in grammar and sentence diagramming under the assumption that these practices will make them better writers.

Post World War II experiments have involved the semantics movement, communications programs, study of language as a basis for composition, and a return to rhetoric. Arnold Tibbetts sums up their efficacy in a humorous essay, "Dogma and Nonsense in the Composition Course," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, May, 1965. But even as Mr. Tibbetts was writing this essay, a major revolution was beginning, and this one shows every sign of retaining its vitality undiminished, ten years later. When Gordon Rohman and Albert Wlecke published the results of their pre-writing experiment at Michigan State in 1964, they began the assault on the most difficult types of problems afflicting any teacher of written composition, problems which had been inadequately dealt with for decades. First, they noted, correctly, that present methods of teaching writing, and these involve all those summarized briefly here, serve to help the student judge his finished effort, not make it. In other words, no matter how finely we hone our analytical skills for discussing prose, they will not help us completely in the process of putting something together, in synthesizing. And certainly, composing is a synthesizing, not an analyzing process. The second problem they deal with is phony student involvement in the writing process. It is possible to teach students the five paragraph essay, strategies for working out comparison and contrast, definition, analysis of a process, and similar patterns of organization. But too often good students learn these strategies and become sophisticated at producing them without involving themselves in the writing they are doing.

Rohman and Wlecke attacked the problem by developing their pre-writing techniques and by using two heuristics, the analogy and the meditation. Their purpose: help students to trust their own experience and powers of observation and incorporate these into essays which have flexible organizational structures which permit them to range in the direction their minds want to go.

John Hawkes and his colleagues at Stanford recognized this problem, also, and attacked it in a somewhat different fashion. They tried to help students find their natural "voice" and incorporate that in their writing. Their methods are different but their concerns very much like those of Rohman and Wlecke. It was

Zoellner, however, who gave fullest explication of the problem of student dissociation in writing. He sees the problem as essentially behavioral rather than intellectual. His methods have rarely been tried so one cannot judge them at present. One other document, Janet Emig's "The Composing Processes of Twelfth Grade Students," (NCTE Research Report No. 13, December 1971), is important because it is yet one more significant voice telling us essentially what Rohman and Wlecke, Hawkes, and Zoellner had been saying earlier. The experience of school sponsored writing is not real for students. They separate it from their real life experience and the language they use to cope with that experience.

It would be very fine, indeed, if I could now say that I have synthesized all these approaches and developed a foolproof method for teaching writing. Such a statement, however, would only establish the foolishness of the person who made it. I am not entirely sure, yet, just how composing should be taught. However, I am quite sure about the kind of classroom which must exist before composing which is authentic and unrestrained has any chance to take place.

In the first place, writing assignments must be flexible. Since students come to us with such a wide range of abilities and levels of preparation, we have to accommodate all of them, even when we cannot tutor each one. I suggest discarding every kind of rigidity associated with theme assignments. First, give them a wide range of writing options. For example, insecure students will still want you to prescribe a topic for them. But make your prescriptions general. For example, if you want them to do something biographical, give them several choices: the person they most admire, the experience which shaped their attitude toward writing, the thing or event which frightened them. If they don't like the choices, tell them to make one of their own. Perhaps they would like to react to something discussed in their reading or in class. The child of a policeman may be steaming because of references to "pigs" by some students in the class. How about the loyal Republican who is suffering through Watergate? All classes contain some live ecologists who haven't had their say on their subject. All classes also have the student who says he has no topic. One of my students suggested that he be asked to write on the subject, "Why There Are No Topics." If you have aspiring professional writers, let them do something on a field of special interest to them and attempt to publish it. The point of this flexibility is to get the problem of complaints about topics off your back. A student with a wide range of choices will eventually find something he wants to write about. The student who still complains that he can think of nothing should be made to see that the nothing exists in him, not in available topics. Most students will welcome the chance to write freely on a subject they have chosen. You can also get away from stifling rigidities by forgetting length requirements. When they ask you, "How long should the paper be?" tell them it should be long enough to get from the beginning to the end of what they have to say. That takes care of the exactly 300 or 500 word nonsense.

Another way of opening up the composition classroom is to establish sensible priorities. Students still come to me thinking that spelling, punctuation, and dangling modifiers count more than anything else. It is absurd, of course, that at this time, we should have to make this point, but we still do. The issue has two sides: the teacher must establish sensible priorities and the students must believe and eventually act on these priorities. Now, in any piece of writing, what is the first priority? Obviously, it is the essential communication of the writer. For example if he is describing something familiar to us, we must get a clear enough picture of the object to recognize it. If we do not, either we are stupid or he has failed. I suggest one practical test for this kind of assignment.

Collect from an automobile mechanic some sparkplugs, gaskets, rings, seals, shock absorbers, washers, and other small parts which he is preparing to discard. Include also a pair of ignition points. Now, tell that portion of your class which knows what these parts are to go to the board and write a description of the points for those students who do not know one automobile part from another. Next, spread all these parts out on your desk and ask individual students to read the descriptions and pick out the points. If they get the right part, ask them which description helped them the most. The same experiment could also be run with somewhat exotic kitchen utensils. My point is that highest priority, in judging a paper, should be given to the way in which the student does whatever communicating he is trying to do. Once you make that priority clear, he will turn his attention to that instead of other more peripheral matters.

Second priority should go to matters of organization and style. The emphasis should not be on correctness but on effectiveness. Which organizational plan works best for this paper? Which word order works best in this sentence? For example, consider these sentences:

Helen went only to the store.
Helen only went to the store.
Helen went to the store only.

This is elementary syntax, of course. But my point is that while all three sentences say approximately the same thing, there are some shades of meaning which differentiate them. Which one does the student choose? The one that comes closest to his meaning, and that would have to be inferred from the context in which the sentence occurs.

The lowest priority should be given to mechanics: spelling, punctuation (which is conventional and not essential to meaning), grammatical errors, etc. We should tell students that conventions of usage and punctuation have little intellectual but enormous social significance. Too often the idiot reading their letters of application can judge only one thing about them: their mastery of these conventions. Therefore, the student either has to learn them or get a good proofreader who will correct them for him. I don't care if my students who are congenitally bad spellers get help; when they mature, those who become businessmen will hire secretaries who will do the job for them. If they can't afford secretaries and won't learn these conventions, they will have to take the consequences.

There are a few other things which help create a classroom in which good composing takes place. There must be some humor. The advertising stereotype of the English teacher, as you know, is of an uptight man in a tuxedo who, affecting a British accent, goes around correcting other people's speech. I hate that stereotype; I recognize it as a gross distortion of what we are and what we do. It may now be anachronistic. Unfortunately, it did not come out of a vacuum. It came from people's impressions of our classrooms when they were in school. Surely, anyone who still carries this stereotype found no humor, no joy, no common sense in his composition classroom. Obviously, I can't say, put humor into your classroom. But I do know that a teacher who refuses to play God, who enjoys a good joke, both on himself as well as others, and who collaborates with his students in their writing efforts, becomes to them more of a human being and less of a wooden dummy with a Shakespeare record in his mouth.

Another essential practice of the good composition classroom is frequent discussion of student papers by the class, teacher acting primarily as traffic director of the comments. I prefer to reproduce papers without students' names because they prefer anonymity. If a student wants to defend his paper, however, let him.

If he lives in mortal fear of having his paper discussed, give him the option of putting a note on his paper requesting that you not use it. And don't use it!

There is no guarantee, of course, that any of us can ever create the ideal composition classroom. But we can strive to eliminate those aspects of it which have caused an empidemic of schizokinetic scribophobia. There are some, I believe, who will say that I exaggerate, that the composition classroom is really quite free, that we have good rapport with our students, that the old methods of teaching writing are still valid. But I received a paper this Fall from a student who was brutally candid about the kind of calculations he went through writing for a new instructor. How formal should he be, how much should he season his papers with phony sophistication, how conservatively should he observe conventions of punctuation, and how carefully should he restrain his natural sense of humor? He summed up his dilemma by saying that "it is hard to tell how much and for how often to 'let it all hang out,' if you will excuse that anachronism, and how much or how often to keep it 'all tucked in.'"

It pleases me to know that a student now feels free to write so candidly. But I sincerely hope that within another ten years' time no student will even think of writing such a paper, that his experience in writing will have been liberating for him all through school. When that occurs we will surely have convinced our students that our receivers are tuned into their "voices."

AN EXPERIMENT WITH CHRISTENSEN'S "RHETORIC OF THE SENTENCE" IN A JUNIOR HIGH ENGLISH CLASS

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In leading up to a discussion of his "generative" rhetoric of the sentence in NOTES TOWARD A NEW RHETORIC (NY: Harper, 1967), Francis Christensen quotes a remarkable narrative-descriptive sentence from Hemingway's IN OUR TIME:

> George was coming down in the telemark position, kneeling, one leg forward and bent, the other trailing, his sticks hanging like some insect's thin legs, kicking up puffs of snow, and finally the whole kneeling, trailing figure coming around in a beautiful right curve, crouching, the legs shot forward and back, the body leaning out against the swing, the sticks accenting the curve like points of light, all in a wild cloud of snow. (Christensen, p. 8)

Christensen makes the telling observation that "only from the standpoint of school grammar is this a simple sentence. (Christensen, p. 8) This sentence illustrates that it is, as Christensen has so amply shown, very often "what's behind that counts" in constructing sentences that are rhetorically excellent, as well as merely grammatically acceptable. That is, a sentence should be concise and "periodic" only if that which it is supposed to express or reflect can satisfactorily be contained in such a form. Clearly, to purge Hemingway's sentence of its long array of cumulative, "free" modifiers would be to geld, not "simplify" his expression.

My belief in Christensen's method as an approach to the problem of teaching composition to inexperienced writers led me to hope that by applying this method in a junior high school English class, I might begin to read student sentences more akin to Hemingway's than to Dick and Jane's. Thus Christensen's advice was both technical and inspirational. At any rate, I experimented in one of my junior high classes with Christensen-oriented materials and methods used previously in my high school and college composition classes. The unit was presented to a group of above average eighth and ninth graders for about two weeks.

In order to justify going into some detail in outlining my procedures in presenting the unit, I would first like to present what I like to think is evidence that my efforts were, at least partially, successful. This evidence consists of examples of sentences that students wrote in an effort to describe a number of action photographs I gave them of scenes from the 1972 Olympics and other subjects. Some of the sentences that came back to me, in all honesty, failed due to muddled syntax, unrealistic punctuation, unsalvageable diction, or a combination of these. However,. of the ten or so students who worked on this assignment, five came up with sentences that, I contend, justified the unit and the methods exploited in it:

1) When the piercing buzzer rang that signaled the end of the basketball game, the happy coach ran, blinded with tears of joy, to a sweating player on the victorious team, and embraced him, squeezing hard, until he grew weak.
2) Two men on the play: one player was running hard, head down, ball tight to chest, crowd cheering him on; also the player of the opposing team, diving for the tackle.
3) Knees slightly bent, back hunched, hands tensely holding the ball, the quarterback stood poised, waiting, watching for the halfback to move into position for the handoff.
4) He came running, eyes glaring, mouth gaping, dumbfounded at losing, legs taut and firm, white shirt hanging limply from his strong, muscular body, arms beside the trunk, fingers pointed down to the coarse, dark ground.

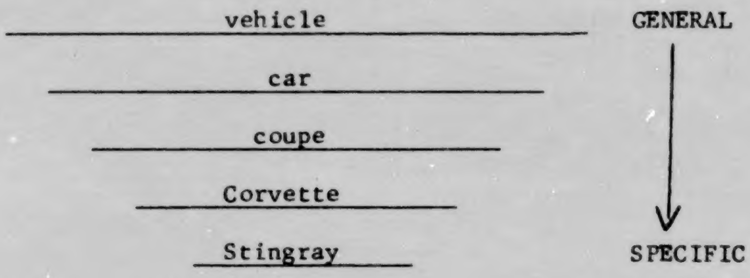
5) His face, forehead furrowed with wrinkles, mouth forming curses, showed his anger and disappointment as he fell, destroying his last chance for victory.

I do not mean to suggest that all of these sentences are perfect and could not be improved. However, here were sentences that, I felt, exhibited nearly every resource of professional writers of description and narration: initial, medial, and final free modifiers; subordination and coordination; and clustering of all sorts, including participial phrases, noun phrases, and absolute phrases. Not a bad assortment. Of course, it is not the quantity of these constructions and patterns that makes good writing, but rather the use to which they are put. Still, by Christensen's criteria the texture of these sentences is rich and that is something in combatting the deadly "plain" style of most student writing. Despite their richness of description, these five sentences show no lack of control, the form of each corresponding very well with the detail by detail presentation of the scene being rendered. Looking back, I have come to agree fully with James L. Green's assessment that, in general, by studying the style, as well as the grammar, of sentences students

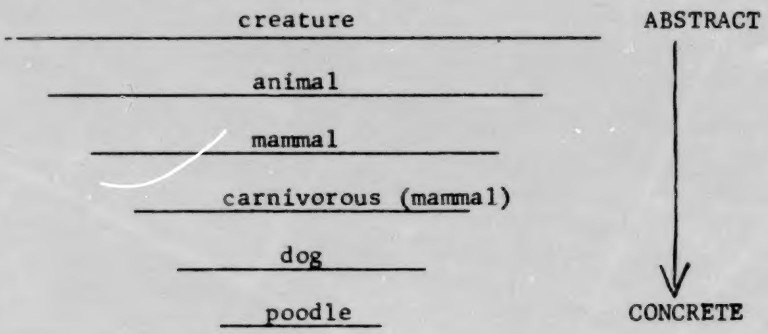
> discover resources of language which they have previously failed to notice. They experiment with these resources in their writing. And while they do not always produce brilliant sentences, they do begin to make conscious choices among forms. ("Acrobats, Plowmen, and the Healthy Sentence," ENGLISH JOURNAL, September 1969, p. 899)

The "guinea pigs" for my experiment consisted of above average eighth and ninth graders completing an advanced grammar unit. In plunging into the rhetoric of the sentence with the group, I hoped to bridge the gap between the grammar study just completed and up-coming literature and composition units.

My first step was to review with the students two key concepts necessary in pursuing Christensen rhetorical analysis. These are the two "semantic ladders"--the one that proceeds from the general to the specific, and the one leading from the abstract to the concrete. For illustrations of these concepts I drew upon materials I had used in semantic units and units on the paragraph. I used the following model of a continuum in clarifying the concepts of generality and specificity:



And to illustrate abstractness and concreteness:



The students managed these concepts with little difficulty and I felt they were prepared to examine the interrelationships of the "parts" of cumulative sentences, that is, the modifying "clusters." I assumed this since typically the relationship of the base (or main) clause in cumulative sentences to its supportive, exemplifying, or developmental levels of modification may be discussed in just these terms--abstract-concrete or general-specific.

I then proceeded to demonstrate Christensen's concept of "levels of modification" in sentences by means of simple examples taken from NOTES TOWARD A NEW RHETORIC. The first examples treated were obvious in order to give the students a ready grasp of the concept prior to moving on into more complicated, less easily analyzed sentences.

My first example was of a simple coordinate sequence, perhaps the easiest rhetorical pattern to visualize; its levels consist simply of a list of separate modifications of the same term or examples falling under a single category, usually repeating the same grammatical structure:

1 . . . they huddled
  2 gaudy motionless and alert,
  2 wild as deer,
  2 deadly as rattlesnakes,
  2 quiet as doves.
--Faulkner (see Christensen, p. 9)

The students quickly recognized these succeeding levels (2) as adjective groups and phrases. I explained that the numeral (1) indicated the base clause, using John Erskine's phrase to characterize it as a "grappling iron to hitch your mind to the reader's." (Christensen, p. 25) I pointed out that the additions served to refine and sharpen into progressively greater focus the image being recreated--that is, the huddling animals. The students were immediately impressed by the almost poetical force of the sentence. I made a point of noting to them that this sentence was taken from the work of an outstanding prose writer, not a poem.

The next rhetorical pattern I introduced was the subordinate sequence, in which each level depends upon or grows out of the previous one and so is assigned the next higher number. Like the coordinate sequence, it reflects a very definite pattern:

1 He dipped his hands in the bichloride solution and shook them,
  2 a quick shake,
    3 fingers down,
      4 like the fingers of a pianist above the keys.
--Sinclair Lewis (Christensen, p. 9)

Right away some debate occurred about the propriety of this analysis, some of the students wanting to make the third level cluster a (2) and not dependent upon "a quick shake," thus causing the final simile to be labeled (3). I managed to convince the majority of them that Christensen's original analysis was, at least, tenable and a good illustration of the "staircase" effect of the straight subordinate sequence. The brief dispute pleased me a good deal because I thought it material proof that the students had taken the bait--i.e. the "puzzle-solving" aspect of analyzing these sentences.

Finally, I attempted to demonstrate the most common of the cumulative sentence types, the "mixed sequence," combining both coordinate and subordinate series.

2 Going back to his (Hemingway's) work in 1944.
1 you perceive his kinship with a wholly different group of novelists,

2 let us say with Poe and Hawthorne and Melville:
  3 the haunted and nocturnal writers,
  3 the men who dealt in images that were symbols of an inner world.

--Malcolm Cowley (Christensen, p. 19)

I tried to stress the inherent structure and organization of the sentence as they are revealed in the analysis. The initial modifier provides the background, limiting the domain of the base clause, which carries the thesis of the sentence and is analogous to a topic sentence in a paragraph. The second second-level cluster sharpens the thesis (and also looks back to it) by providing specific examples of what the author speaks of more generally in the base clause. The last two third level noun clusters clarify descriptively the three examples--Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville--by stating what the author wants to emphasize about their character as writers and also by providing a rhetorically forceful parallelism of structure in the last phrase and clause of the sentence. With the analysis laid out before them, the students appeared to have no difficulty making sense of the inherent organization of this rather detailed sentence. They could plainly see the way in which the logical continuity of the thought is maintained by careful structuring of the form of the sentence. By this time, most of the students understood the concept of levels of modification, could identify the three types of sequences, and began to use the vocabulary of this method with some facility.

At this point, all the basic concepts and techniques were, for the most part, available to the students. I proceeded to give them a ditto containing five sentences by professional writers. The first two were by Francis Christensen himself (to illustrate he practiced what he preached), followed by an example each from Hemingway, Loren Eisley, and Walter Van Tilburg Clark. I called upon various students to read the sentences aloud and we discussed any difficulties in vocabulary or syntax the students encountered on a first reading. Then I passed out a second ditto containing the same sentences fully analyzed by levels. This gave the students a chance to compare fairly difficult sentences in their native form to the sentences after analysis. We then held an extensive discussion of the following examples. The analysis of the Hemingway sentence is by Christensen; the others are my own efforts:

> The main clause, which may or may not have a sentence modifier before it, advances the discussion; but the additions move backwards, as in this clause, to modify the statement of the main clause or more often to explicate or exemplify it, so that the sentence has a flowing and ebbing movement, advancing to a new position and then pausing to consolidate it, leaping and lingering as the popular ballad does.
>
> --Francis Christensen

1 The main clause, which may or may not have a sentence modifier before it, advances the discussion;
1 but the additions move backwards, as in this clause, to modify the statement of the main clause or more often to explicate or exemplify it,
  2 so that the sentence has a flowing and ebbing movement, (SC)
    3 advancing to a new position and then pausing to consolidate it, (VC)
      4 leaping and lingering as the popular ballad does. (VC)

The additions stay with the same idea, probing its bearings, exemplifying it or seeking an analogy or metaphor for it, or reducing it to details.
--Christensen

1 The additions stay with the same idea,
2 probing its bearings, (VC)
2 exemplifying or seeking an analogy or metaphor for it, (VC)
2 or reducing it to details. (VC)

Alone in the center of the ring the bull stood, still fixed. Fuentes, tall, flatbacked, walking toward him arrogantly, his arms spread out, the two slim, red sticks, one in each hand, held by the fingers, points straight forward. --Hemingway

1 Alone in the center of the ring the bull stood,
2 still fixed. (VC)
1 Fuentes, tall, flatbacked,
2 walking toward him arrogantly, (VC)
3 his arms spread out, (Abs)
3 the two slim, red sticks, (NC)
4 one in each hand, (Abs)
5 held by the fingers, (VC)
4 points straight forward. (Abs)

There she was, the universe running down around her, warmly arranged around her guy ropes attached to the lamp supports--a great black and yellow embodiment of the life force, not giving up to either frost or stepladders.
--Loren Eisley

1 There she was,
2 the universe running down around her, (Abs)
2 warmly arranged around her guy ropes attached to the lamp supports-- (VC)
2 a great black and yellow embodiment of the life force, (NC)
3 not giving up to either frost or stepladders. (VC)

On a hilltop projection of stone ten miles inland, he struck her down, gripping her rustling body with his talons, beating her wings down with his wings, belting her head when she wimpered or thrashed and, at last, clutching her neck with his hook and, when her coy struggles had given way to stillness, succeeded.

--Walter Van Tilburg Clark

2 On a hilltop projection of stone two miles inland, (PP)
1 he struck her down,
2 gripping her rustling body with his talons, (VC)
2 beating her wings down with his wings, (VC)
2 belting her head when she wimpered or thrashed, (VC)
and, at last,
2 clutching her neck with his hook and, (VC)
2 when her coy struggles had given way to stillness, (SC)
1 succeeded.

In all of these sentences it was possible to talk about the author's purpose in each statement and relate it directly to the structure he chose to use, the analyses illustrating graphically the essential points. I will not detail my discussion of these examples for reasons of space and since also, I presume, each teacher using these, or similar, examples would want to approach them in his or her own way, in a way that would suit the ability level, academic sophistication, vocabulary, etc. of the students involved. If the sentences and analyses shown here are used, I would recommend changing the order of presentation to more sensibly reflect a more or less increasing level of difficulty. The following order seems more logical to me now: Eisley, Christensen #2, Christensen #1, Clark and Hemingway. Also, I am convinced that overhead projection would be a very helpful supplement to the discussion.

The next step was the obvious one of turning students loose to do their own analyses of a collection of sentences. I provided them with a set taken from Christensen's examples in the first essay in NOTES TOWARD A NEW RHETORIC, altered to regular sentence shape, of course. I tried to start with the simplest and work up gradually to the most complex and difficult. Unfortunately, the students fared less well than I'd hoped. They did well on the syntactically and rhetorically easier sentences, but almost no one was able to separate out the headwords and clusters in the more elaborate examples. I am convinced, however, that the students would have done well had not a number of the sentences been quite so intricate. I intend to shop around for a new, better chosen, set of examples, keeping a special file of index cards for the purpose. Despite the difficulty, however, I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the students in their efforts to "unravel" these sentences.

I followed up with a brief quiz involving analysis of a simple coordinate sequence and a slightly more difficult mixed sequence. The results were encouraging. Nearly all the students correctly analyzed the first problem, and about half handled the second. I gave the answers to the students on dittoed sheets, that they might correct their own work. In retrospect, I think going over the test sentences via an overhead projector would have been very helpful.

The following day we held a kind of workshop. I divided the class of about twenty students into two groups. Half went to the library armed with a list of selected authors and works to find and record examples of sentences they thought excellent and possible targets for future in-class analysis. The other half remained to write their own cumulative sentences describing magazine sports photographs. I used photographs as subjects, but some other possibilities might be:

1) Machines in operation, e.g. a record changer or typewriter
2) Films or plays with action scenes or live sports events (a track meet would be ideal); possibly an orchestra performance
3) Working scientific models, animals, specimens, etc.

The point is that simple description, narration, or narrative description, as Christensen contend, represent an ideal starting point for sentence writing since there

> Is no problem of invention; the student has something to communicate--his immediate sense impressions, which can stand a bit of exercising. The material is not already verbalized--he has to match language to sense impressions. (Christensen, p. 15)

As far as its relevance to the junior high school classroom is concerned, I hold that the kind of sentence analysis and study Christensen opened up offers a means of providing the student writer with some of the structural options he needs to make his writing everything it can be, at least at the level of the sentence. I am further convinced that above average and even average students can benefit a good deal from Christensen's insights than from endless, enforced nitpicking over sentences from 1966 editions of WARRINER'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION.

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SEEING, SHAPING, AND SOCKING IT TO 'EM

Donald R. Gallo, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain

(The program described below was accomplished while Dr. Gallo was a reading specialist at Bell Junior High School, Golden, Colorado during the 1972-73 year.)

"Hey, Gallo. What's this thing?" a wise guy yelled to me in the crowded hall. He was pointing to the new course descriptions in the school's recently dittoed catalog of courses to be offered during the spring semester.

"What do you mean, 'What's this thing?'?" What's it say?" I responded in my non-directive, aloof, teacher's tone.

"What's 'Seeing, Shaping, and Socking It To 'Em?" he querried without reading further.

"It's a new course. . . in writing. Well, not entirely writing. We'll do some different things." How could I explain it? I hadn't developed it clearly myself. All I was sure about was that the school had the worst writing performance of the 20 junior high schools in the district, and most of the English teachers intended to do more-of-the-same-only-harder in their usual writing courses next semester. They didn't even see a need to write an interesting course description to attract kids. (Furthermore, I was hired as the school's reading specialist. Why didn't I mind my own business?)

There were no prerequisites. The course was open to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders of all abilities. (Some members of the department didn't like that either.) Maybe the catchy title did it. Fewer than 20 students preregistered for the traditional "creative writing" classes. Over 90 preregistered for "Seeing, Shaping, etc." We had to talk some kids into taking other classes because of scheduling difficulties. I also urged the drama teacher to teach one section of the course with 30 kids. I ended up with 37, including 8 of the school's hand-picked trouble makers and goof-offs.

Now I've done it, I thought. I've stuck my neck out and these kids are going to make me look so bad I'll never be able to face the department members again! Thirty-seven kids in a writing class? No textbooks? No learning packets? No money to buy anything? I didn't even have my own room! What was potentially even worse was that we met in one partially partitioned corner of a large open area which contained the library, the reading lab, and three other classes. No traditional program would ever work there. So I juggled.

And I continued to juggle for 17 weeks. I set up a semi-individualized composition program in which students could earn grades according to the quality and quantity of the work they produced.

The purpose of the course was to help students organize their experiences--real and imagined--into some form that would have meaning to others. It was to be in written form most often, though other creative art forms would be used. Students would use pencils, pens, and typewriters most of the time; but they could also experiment with photographs, cameras, paints, tape recorders, and drama if they liked. I wanted the kids to write a great deal, to try forms and words they had never tried before, to enjoy composing, and to learn to write more effectively as the course progressed.

I initially prepared a list of 46 possible projects which a student could choose to do if and when he liked. A student was to work alone most of the time, but he could work with a small group if he chose. In fact, some projects required more than one student to work together. All a student needed to do was to tell me what project he or she intended to do next so I could offer suggestions for where to begin, what to read, whom to talk to, what to include, how to proceed, etc.

It was individualized in that sense, but by no means were the students left on their own to silently work through packets and worksheets. Since the room contained tables with from 2 to 6 students at each, and since the students automatically grouped themselves around those tables according to their own criteria--three boastful 9th grade boys at one, five sweet, giggly 7th grade girls at another--the kids at one whole table often decided to work on the same project at the same time. That made my work easier. I met with them as a group to get them started, saw them again as they were working, and finally discussed my evaluation with them when they were finished.

But that still wasn't enough guidance, of course. Left to their own whims, each student initially chose only those projects which he or she had done in other classes or those which sounded easiest. They learned nothing. (They did experience initial success, however, so that procedure was not entirely without merit.)

The students were--in my opinion--in my class to learn, not to coast. I was not about to force them to learn, however. So each day, or whenever I had a chance to prepare a special presentation, I set aside a few minutes out of a class period--sometimes 5 minutes, sometimes half an hour--for a special lesson. I would "teach." The students had their choice of working with me then or doing their own thing.

In these instances, the open area became a fantastic asset. A couple of students would choose to work in the library, perhaps researching for a project, maybe just looking at magazines, sometimes just reading leisure stuff. One student might use the typewriter in my office. Another might use the tape recorder. A small group could use the open space for a group collage they were developing. The giggly girls would occasionally ask to use one of the nearby small conference rooms to practice for a skit. Some would prefer to work at their tables or on the floor in a corner of the room.

Before students chose to go their various ways, I always introduced what I intended to develop further with a small group. I'd try to sell the idea or give them a taste of what we'd be doing for 10 or 15 minutes. Those who liked my ideas for that day, or those who were bored with their other choices, gathered around the chalk board or a designated table or in a conference room where I was going to do my thing.

Working in the "classroom" was usually best, because if I did something really interesting, before long not only were the members of the original small group working on it, but most of those who had remained in or near the "room" joined in. Because our "room" was in a part of the open area, and because there were always a few kids roaming the halls, we often had three or four "outsiders" participating. They'd stop to watch one of the short creative films we'd project on the wall-- "Dream of Wild Horses" for one--or join in in trying their hand at a haiku or to observe the presentation of a student-made TV deodorant commercial.

Those kinds of teacher-led activities were the most productive and the most fun for all of us. But there were other kinds of teacher-led presentations. At least once a week I made a whole-class presentation on some aspect of writing. We worked on Seeing--observing, noting details, using vivid descriptors; then on Shaping--organizing, rewriting, proofreading; and on Socking It To 'Em--attractive leads, emphasis, main ideas, conclusions. One day I'd read a group of exciting, catchy lead sentences and we'd discuss them; another day I would teach a mini-lesson on transitions, along with worksheets; we described objects and pictures using vivid descriptors. In a similar manner we worked on sentence structure, organization, figurative language, style, levels of language, and form. Sometimes I just read to the class--their own papers, articles about writing, my own poems, Ernest Hemingway, Art Buchwald, Paul Zindel.

When individual students needed personal help on skills of various kinds, I worked with them individually usually, and in small groups when it could be arranged. Jennie needed to put her ideas on cassette tapes before she wrote. Bonnie, Brad, Curt, and Dan had to decrease the number of run on sentences they used habitually. Kippy, Cindy, and Yolanda had to work on varying sentence patterns. Dan seldom capitalized the first word in his sentences. Sam, Jim, and Eric were terrible spellers.

Kathy Sobrio helped here. She was one of 14 parents who volunteered half a day a week to the school, most of them tutoring in the reading lab. Kathy worked one day a week with specific students or a small group who needed special attention at that point. Having been a competent and creative English teacher previously, she worked extremely well with the kids. (Every class should have a Kathy.)

Sometimes those teacher-led activities related directly to one type of project. Sometimes they were just skill building activities that could be applied anywhere. Sometimes I'd invent a new project based on the activity we were doing that day. Students liked that best. That way they could work with our group and still not take time away from working on a project.

The projects were goals for the kids. Most of them were short enough to be finished in two or three periods, even with revisions. Others took longer. Below are some of the projects which large numbers of students did and enjoyed most:

1. Construct a collage to describe yourself.
2. Construct a collage on a theme (love, tenderness, happiness, speed, death, loneliness, hunger, etc.).
3. Describe a real-life landscape scene. (About a third of the students lived in the hills with spectacular mountain views; another third lived in mobile homes.)
4. Interview four different students on a pertinent topic and write a summary of their views.
5. Write a description of your room to a friend in Washington; write about the same room to a blind student who will be living in your room while you are on vacation for a week.
6. Write to Dear Abby about some problem you have.
7. Write a half-dozen poems about anything you like.
8. Describe one of your parents to the Missing Persons' Bureau; describe the same person to your best friend.
9. Watch a person you don't know for several minutes; describe the expressions on his or her face.
10. You don't like guns and you don't believe in killing animals. But for

Christmas your rich uncle sends you a hunting rifle with 200 rounds of ammunition. Write him a letter and refuse the gift nicely.

11. Invent an animal. Sketch it. Write a description of what it eats, how it moves, where it lives, etc.
12. Write the life story of a thumb tack from the tack's point of view. (Get the point?)
13. Create an ad to sell a product and then get some class members to act it out in front of class.
14. Complete the 4-page packet on creative language. (What shape is a burp? What kind of an animal do your parents think you are? Why? The room was as quiet as __________.)
15. Write a letter to complain about a product.

No one did that last one until I duplicated a copy of a letter I had written to the Campbell Soup Company complaining that a can of their Stockpot soup hadn't contained a single piece of beef. "You mean we could write a real letter?" they asked, as if what they usually did in school was unreal. (Yup.) "Yup," I answered. And what was even more rewarding to them than writing was receiving responses from the companies to whom they complained.

Some of the suggested projects were never done until I explained them. One was "Write a diamante." None of the kids had ever heard of such a creature before. So I described and gave examples of diamante. I also introduced them to cinquain and reviewed haiku. We wrote some on the board together and then they wrote their own. It was hard to get some of the kids to write any other kinds of poems after that.

We had fun discussing reincarnation one day, then some kids wrote about what they'd like to be after they died. Carole Stevens wrote:

> If I would die, I should like to be a very dignified trashy house-cat. I would only eat the food I liked. I would whine and howl part of the night. All day long I would sleep and play. My favorite toy would be a super ball. I would chase it from one end of the house to the other. I think my name would be WHITE STUFF.

One of the best projects came late in the semester. It was an unusual winter and spring came very late, so we had to wait until nearly the last weeks of school before the snow melted in the cemetary down the street from the school. On a warm and sunny day all 38 of us walked out of the school and into the partially groomed cemetary where large dandelions and small wild irises bloomed abundantly among the sandstone and granite grave markers. I chose one old marker on a small hill, called the kids around me, and introduced them to and read them two selections from (you guessed it) Edgar Lee Master's SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY. They listened politely, some toying with the tall grass, a few perched precariously on nearby stones. They heard, but they didn't know what to do or say or what was expected of them. (All they had known for sure about today's class was that they would be getting out of school for an hour.) I then pointed to the grave marker around which we sat.

AUGUST BREDALAND

AGE 29

DIED SEPT. 19, 1881

"What do you suppose August died of at the early age of 29?" I asked. All sorts of possible and not so possible answers filled the clear air. The kids suddenly saw the possibilities for writing: interesting names, old dates, imaginations free to suppose death from any causes! They scattered through the small cemetary.

One group of girls discovered an entire hill on which were buried only infants: Katy, 3 years, 5 months, 5 days, died December 1; a son of William and Mary Starr, dead after only 2 months and 13 days of life. The group was touched. They made dandelion chains and laid them around the stones. One of the boys whose main interests were cars, guns, and war was surprised to find a section of the cemetary reserved for military. One wandering group was intercepted by the old groundskeeper who pointed out the grave of Gertrude Bell, the woman after whom our school was named. Delight! This was school? This was a writing class? This was fantastic!

Most of the kids took notes of names, dates, shapes and types of grave markers. Some wrote on the spot. Some just wandered around. During the next few days a number of the students wrote articles, stories, and/or poems about death. A few kids returned to the cemetary with special permission during their lunch hour the following day to continue their investigations.

Many of their products were very good. Donna DeMaria, turned on by the SPOON RIVER approach, wrote:

JOHNIE PARKER
DIED 1881 2 YRS. 7 MOS.

I remember such a little bit,
But there's one thin' I remember real good--
My mama standin' at the door of the house
Callin' "Johnie! Johnie Parker! Supper's on!"
I'd come runnin' from the garden,
Where I'd be helping Papa,
Or from wadin' in the brook,
Or pokin' 'round an ole ant hole.

The thing I like most to remember
Is Mama puttin' me to bed at night,
She'd be singin' me a little song,
Blow at the lamp,
An' kiss me on the forehead,
That was real fine!

Then one day I did somethin'
I promised Mama I'd never do,
I went into the road that runs by our place,
Jus' lookin' for some nice rocks to put in my pockets,
But then a wagon came,
With horses,
And now there ain't nuthin' left,
But to remember.

Some proposed projects didn't go over so well. No one, for example, wrote a critical analysis of a TV or radio commercial. Only two girls worked on a short film (and then ruined it somehow). Only two boys chose to write a news report of a sporting event. No one wrote a parody of their favorite TV show. No one dared to interview parents about the slang expressions that seem to bug them. A few kids, especially boys, roamed the halls and the toilets, collecting grafitti one day, but most of the collections turned out to be lists of obscene words, and no one scoured the stalls and walls of local restaurants and gas stations to enlarge their collections or their vocabularies. That took too much time. Shorter projects worked best, always. The ones no one tried were also projects that I did not spend time on myself. That is, I never prepared a catchy mini-lesson on how to do them, and just sending kids to a set of materials or a collection of composition texts (no matter how good) did not inspire or interest most of them.

I had hoped that a list of 46 projects would certainly be long enough to keep a pile of kids working every day for a semester. But it may not have been interesting enough. All 46 projects were presented to the class at once and copies of the list were retained in everyone's notebook or classroom file folder. No matter how exciting some of the projects may have sounded, it was--after a while--the same old list. To keep it interesting I had to add projects to the list periodically. I got new ideas from texts by Stephen Judy (Random House) and Ken Macrorie (Hayden). I called friends in other schools, other towns. Kids proposed additional projects. And the list grew by 5 one day, a dozen the next week, three more the following month. New life came into the class each time.

A big problem with any kind of composition course, especially with any one that is designed to encourage rather than punish kids for writing, is how to evaluate the work. Since there were 7th, 8th, and 9th graders in the class, all of varying abilities, it was an added difficulty. How could I weigh a collage done by an average 7th grade girl against a film made by a creative, able 9th grade boy? How could anyone ever compare the creativity of an ad written by a bright 8th grader with a two paragraph, unimaginative short story attempted by a low-ability 9th grader?

So I tried to be only semi-arbitrary. I judged each student's product according to my estimates of his or her ability and previous performance. And since I was able to work directly with many of the students each day, I could judge much of the work on how it improved from conception through rewrite. The grade level of the students therefore was essentially immaterial. In fact, the most capable writers in the class turned out to be the 7th graders (those giggly girls), while the least capable were the 9th graders.

I also gave weights to each project by assigning a number of points to each. For example, creating an ad was worth 8 points; describing a landscape was 10; interviews of students were 20; an obituary was worth 14; a short story 20; a multi-media show 30; a journal kept for a month 30. Students could also submit their own proposed projects and dicker with me and a group of impartial students on the number of points it would be worth.

When a student completed a project he submitted it for evaluation. I would read and evaluate it; sometimes a group of students would do that. Instead of a grade, the student earned points according to my estimate of the project's quality. For example, when Kim elected to write a character description but described only the physicals features of her subject I awarded her 12 of a possible 20 points, indicating her strengths in the paper and pointing out how to add descriptions of the subject's actions and behaviors. She rewrote the paper and earned an additional 6 points, giving her a total of 18 out of 20, a pretty good score. (She could also have settled for the 12 and gone on to another project.)

The point system had one great advantage for getting reluctant students working. (Remember that everyone in this class did not volunteer; a few of those "problem" boys were "volunteered" by the office.) I could arbitrarily, but fairly, award previously unannounced points for doing certain things. For example, we needed magazines for collages and sample articles. So any student who brought 5 magazines earned 1 point, up to a total of 5 points. I gave Tom one point for each word (from his paper) he learned to spell correctly one week. I bet Curt two points he couldn't stay out of trouble for a whole period (he lost).

Nearly 1000 points were available to be earned throughout the 17 weeks of the semester. I made a rough guess at the total number of points a slow, an average, and a good student might earn in a week and arrived at a total number of points a student had to earn by the end of the semester to earn an A, B, etc. A student needed only 50 points--3 a week--to pass. For a D, one needed between 50 and 149 points. A student needed 150-249 for a C, 250-349 for a B, and 350 or more (20+ a week) for an A. (The midterm grade was half that number of points.)

At times I thought the total number of points was too high for anyone to attain; sometimes I thought it wasn't enough. It turned out that it was just about right. The abilities and desires of the students led to something like an even distribution, with 7 A's, 1 F, 6 D's, a few C's, and a bunch of B's. The two top students earned nearly 450 points each.

In repeating the course I would retain the total number of points required for each grade. But since many kids have difficulty pacing themselves (lots have trouble just getting started!) I would require each student to set bi-weekly goals for himself. Then he would know how much he had done, can do, and needs to do if he intends to earn a B or a C or whatever grade he elects to work for.

About two-thirds of the way through the semester the class elected an editorial board of five students. Each student in the class was asked to submit one or more of his or her best work and the editorial board would select the best of those to put together in the class' own literary magazine. The kids collected manuscripts, read them, edited, organized, typed dittos, duplicated, and sold copies for 5¢ each (to cover the cost of paper) at the final class of the year.

As a result of this individualized program the students learned to improve their writing, they enjoyed the activities, they tried new things, they worked at their own rates and levels, and they earned the grades they chose to work for. Few kids were disappointed. I was delighted with their success.

SEE DICK AND JANE WRITE

James R. Rankin and Margaret B. Fleming, University of Arizona

Why would two English Education professors spend three weeks trying to teach composition to 100 fifth- and sixth-graders? Did we think we could show the teachers how to do it? Were we trying to find out how and when problems in writing begin? Or were we looking for a lesson in humility?

Whatever we thought we were seeking, we certainly found humility. How much we actually taught would be difficult to say. But we believe that what we learned has valuable implications for teachers of composition at any level.

As former high school teachers, teachers of English methods courses, and supervisors of secondary student teachers, our professional interest was natural enough, even though neither of us had any previous background or training in elementary education. But since both of us had children in elementary school, we had a personal interest as well.

Like most parents who are also teachers, we had been very critical of how and what our children were apparently being taught. One problem we had both deplored was that of "making reports" by copying verbatim from the encyclopedia with no acknowledgement. When told, "Put it into your own words," the children would often, we found, continue to copy, merely skipping phrases or changing words here and there.

We were convinced that this practice was bad for two reasons. First, the children were not learning to pick out main ideas and significant details. Second, copying without acknowledgment--as we knew very well--often leads to the unwitting plagiarism which gets high school and college students into trouble when they write research papers.

We felt that if students were going to copy--perhaps a necessary first step--the minimum requirements should be to enclose quoted material in quotation marks and write down the name of the source. But, more than this, instead of just being told to put it into their own words, students obviously needed instruction in how to pick out main ideas and supporting details--that is, in how to outline and to summarize.

Our project might never have got further than this ritual grumbling and theorizing if one of us had not mentioned the problem to an elementary school principal and received enthusiastic encouragement from him to experiment with a mini-course at his school. Deciding here was a chance to put our theories into practice, we accepted his offer.

Helen Keeling School, in the Amphitheater District of Tucson, is located in a middle- and lower-middle-income neighborhood. Most of the parents are unskilled or semi-skilled workers, with a few in lower-income professions, such as teaching. About 24% of our students were Mexican-American; about 4% black. We worked with a science, a language, and a social studies teacher--who all teach the two fifth- and two sixth-grade classes.

During the thirteen days we were at Keeling, we spent from 30 to 45 minutes with each class every day. Perhaps the simplest and clearest way to explain what we did is to provide an outline of the work we attemped and some key observations for each day. In what follows, the left-hand column summarizes the major activities of each day; the right-hand column points to highlights of what happened.

1) After becoming acquainted with the classes, we discussed various ways to get a subject to write about, especially the sources that might be consulted for information. Then we talked over these sources and their contributions to researching and reporting. Many students had already decided on their subject; we requested the others to make their choices by the next day.	1) From the very start we experienced no problems with the students' participation. In all the classes the children were willing to talk and discuss and raise questions, usually with pertinence. The participation continued throughout our thirteen sessions.
2) We asked the students to copy a paragraph dealing with their topic from a relevant source, basically some encyclopedia. We emphasized three tasks: use of quotation marks, accuracy of detail in copying, and identification of the source by author and title.	2) Here we encountered certain difficulties that persisted throughout our teaching. Many students had trouble finding references and focusing on the material. Mechanics also bothered many: the copying contained large amounts of erratic spelling, punctuation, and spacing, generally making for distorted and inaccurate copies that were hard to read. Clearly, there was a wide range of verbal abilities in each class. Poor reading skills frequently stood out.
3) We returned the previous day's paragraph for work on summarizing. Then we divided into three small groups for oral work in the recall of main ideas and supporting details.	3) As a generalization the written summaries were adequate for stating main ideas, although many discrepancies appeared in mechanics and in writing complete sentences. We were flabbergasted with the lack of listening power in the small groups, with the inability or unwillingness to pay attention. Strangely, those giving the reports did not seem bothered by the failure of the others to listen.
4) Since this class was on Monday, we decided to review the work of the past three days. We placed a paragraph on the board for discussion of major points in copying, in selecting main idea, and in choosing important details. Then we distributed magazines in which we had marked short passages for copying and for practice in writing the main idea.	4) The students were hard to settle down, particularly in the second part of the lesson. Many did not finish copying their individual passages. Those who did often found it difficult to select the main idea even when they talked with us privately as we circulated during the activity, and prompting and questioning. In several of the classes a few children persisted in disturbing others and in refusing to try anything themselves. With them an one-to-one relationship brought meager results.

5) We put the paragraph from yesterday on the board again and proceeded to work with outlining: underlining and copying the main idea, then supplying supporting details. We also read additional paragraphs for further practice.	5) This class session went much more smoothly than yesterday's. Probably the greater amount of time on more limited concerns, the heavy insistence on oral plus written response, the greater emphasis on direct and more focused instruction, the increase in practice--all these accounted for better results. And it was no longer a Monday.
6) Following up the previous two days' emphasis, we dictated short passages of three-to-five sentences, and we worked further on main ideas plus relevant details.	6) The children had had previous experience with dictations and completed this task expeditiously. A minor annoyance centered on a few people crying out for repetition of the reading again and again. The quality of the mechanics showed some improvement as did the ability to pick out main ideas.
7) As a change of pace and as preparation for a different kind of activity, we read some of Aesop's Fables aloud. Then the students decided on appropriate morals and compared these with the originals.	7) The fables provoked high interest, and the students showed usually a good grasp of each fable, including its details. Several of the supplied morals were clever in their application, and some were ironic (like the dog who got syphilis from heavy petting).
8) Individual members of the class summarized orally the fables from yesterday. Now we asked the classes to compose their own fables a la Aesop. In one sixth grade where the class had been doing work on diseases individually selected for research, we requested that the fable incorporate, if possible, some of the findings about the particular disease.	8) There was good recall of the details of the fables. In writing their own, most students plunged into the task with gusto. Although many fables turned out to be highly derivative, simply recastings of Aesop with different animals or minor details, in every class some fables illustrated an ingenious combining of the elements of a story plus work to date on their chosen subjects. In one sixth grade the findings on disease figured prominently and, as a rule, pertinently in the fables. We were struck by two observations especially: the background provided by the researching in the selected subjects fed the writing of the fables heavily--i.e., those students who had worked well at the previous activities now had something to say and use; in the more "creative" task of composing a fable we found a pleasant surprise--some of the slower, less verbally talented children did excellent work. Thus we underline the importance of rhetorical invention and the provision of a variety of writing tasks in the classroom, with careful preparation and incubation.

9) We read and discussed the fables composed yesterday.	9) The classes thoroughly enjoyed this, asked for more, and talked easily about each fable they heard.
10) We returned the fables, asking the writers to clean up their mechanics and otherwise edit and revise their fables for posting on the bulletin board. We circulated to provide on-the-spot attention and aid.	10) This day was perhaps the high point of our teaching. The children were eager to have their fables posted and worked intensively to complete their revisions. The posting of their fables stimulated interest in detail and neatness, and many students added drawings to their fables.
11) We distributed postcards with reproductions of famous art works. These, we hoped, would serve as stimuli for the writing of stories and would build on the successful experience with the fables.	11) There was some confusion over selecting the picture to write about, with much trading of postcards. Once the picture was selected, the students in general got down to work, seemed to like what they were doing, and produced their stories, some of them quite lengthy and detailed.
12) On this next-to-the-last day of our teaching, we passed out a dittoed "test" for recapitulating certain of the main emphasis of our instruction. It consisted of a different newspaper clipping for each class with the same three tasks: copy exactly, giving the source; write down the main idea; cite a few important details.	12) Although the results in general did not turn out badly, they were disappointing. They were no worse than the results of our original endeavors during the first week of classes, but they were marked by unevenness and inconsistency. For example, several students copied poorly yet produced accurate statements of main ideas, or a great number performed the first two tasks adequately but really fell down on the selection of details. It is hard to determine, however, whether inability or indifference accounted for the meager improvement, although we incline toward the latter explanation.
13) On our last day we sandwiched an oral evaluation between two sessions of reading the picture stories to the classes.	13) Again, the children responded excitedly to the stories and asked for more. They wanted to know about the painters who had done the pictures and details of their lives. The evaluation included wide participation. The comments were open and frank and generally positive. It was evident that the students had learned the major points we had stressed--about copying, selecting main ideas, picking out details, realizing the importance of having something to say--but it was also clear that they did not always apply them in their own work. Thus we had an ample demonstration of the perennial difficulty confronted by teachers: the students possess the requisite knowledge but do not use it or connect it with the tasks they face.

As a conclusion to this section of our report, we would like to add a few other observations. We received throughout our teaching the fullest cooperation from the principal and the three teachers who so graciously allowed us to use their classrooms. Toward the end of our teaching we met for a forthright and valuable critique of what we had attempted. Next year we hope to continue our joint efforts. The students we taught were appreciative and showed this in many ways. Perhaps the outstanding example took place on our last day when many of the children communicated their feelings by clapping, shaking hands, asking for our autographs, and presenting us with drawings they had made for us. We were touched.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the recommendations that follow, we do not intend to sound like Olympians handing down pronouncements, since our three-week experiment hardly qualifies us as experts in elementary education. Rather, these suggestions attempt to analyze the problems we encountered and to classify them from idea (which Aristotle called invention) through arrangement to style.

From classifying problems to solving them is a giant step, but we are convinced that many of these recommendations could best be implemented if teachers had help from others. Although we had known beforehand that elementary teachers have a nearly impossible task, we came away with a direct personal experience of it. We found that both of us and the regular teacher were kept busy helping the children with their writing assignments. Since instruction in composition demands so much individual attention, it would certainly be helpful to have assistance from parents, university students, or teachers' aides. Nor would professional training always be necessary. With a teacher's guidance, any adult--or even an older student--could provide help and direction for children doing writing assignments. Moreover, they could give the attention and concern that some of these children so obviously and desperately need.

Now let us move to the more specific recommendations resulting from the analysis of our three-week experiment. We have arranged them in five categories, the first four dealing with the students' problems: motivation, inability to grasp main ideas and details, unsophisticated sentence structure, inadequate control of mechanics; and the last giving some general suggestions for the teachers' consideration.

MOTIVATION

1. Build on talk. Use this as a basis for writing. As the British say, "Keep the flow moving." Emphasize the relationship between talking and listening. Since many of the students find it difficult to listen, audio-visual devices, such as tape recorders, might be used to keep interest high.
2. Expose children to varied patterns of sentence structure. Many of them lack the basic skills to read complex patterns, but it might be instructive to see whether it helps develop their reading comprehension.
3. Vary the writing activities. Being sequential doesn't preclude having a variety of writing tasks.
4. Perhaps small groups could work together, in planning a piece of writing, in constructing it, and in editing and revising. A class composition might also be helpful. The teacher should not be afraid of structure or of giving detailed guidance. Too much composition is merely assigned, rather than taught.
5. Exercises that demand combining two or more concepts seem to stimulate creativity. This was illustrated for us by our fable assignment. Those incor-

porating the diseases the students were studying were much more imaginative than those that merely imitated Aesop. (See A and B in appendix.)

6. Use art and music as stimuli. The children seemed hungry for such things. After the exercises with the art reproductions, several asked if they could keep their pictures. Other postcards simply disappeared. Like the people who put Bibles in hotel rooms, we were delighted that students cared enough to take them. The children also showed interest in biographical anecdotes of such artists as Van Gogh and Gauguin. Many of them like to draw. If they could have some expert insturction in art, this natural interest could easily be directed toward visual aspects of composition.

INABILITY TO GRASP MAIN IDEAS AND DETAILS

This was our biggest problem and the one we had least success in coping with. Obviously it is one that requires long-range, cumulative instruction.

1. Start with the concept of the abstraction ladder from Hayakawa and build on it continuously until children can pick out main ideas and subordinate details, and thus can outline and summarize--basic skills for both reading and writing.

2. Use "de-written" paragraphs, in which students are supplied the main ideas only and have to provide relevant details.

3. Use an exercise in generalization, such as the following: Give students a bag of objects (keys, pencils, pills, etc.) and say they were found on a man in a Moscow restroom. What can they tell about him from the objects alone?

4. Give students two unrelated sentences and have them write one unified paragraph using both sentences. Neither one can be the topic sentence. Sentences embodying facts or statistics are the best for this experience. If it is too difficult at first, it can be modified by using words or phrases instead of complete sentences.

UNSOPHISTICATED SENTENCE STRUCTURE

1. Reading--and listening to--a variety of styles can develop a feeling for the potentialities of the language. It was very apparent to us from their writing styles which children read a great deal. (See B and C in appendix.)

2. Teachers should not be afraid of using--at least occasionally--material which is more complex than students are used to. How else can their minds expand and grow?

3. Use exercises that ask students to imitate sentence patterns. These will also reinforce understanding of--not merely labeling of--grammatical constructions.

4. Do sentence-combining exercises to teach subordination. Most of the children relied on very simple sentences joined by ands. (See D in appendix.) They might practice various ways of combining such sentences and discuss the emphasis of each.

INADEQUATE CONTROL OF MECHANICS

1. Analyze students' strengths and weaknesses, preferably in conjunction with other teachers, and determine priorities. Concentrate on these. This is another problem that demands long-range, cumulative emphasis. The teacher--and assistants if possible--should circulate during the performance of writing assignments to offer help and thus prevent problems that might otherwise arise.

2. Encourage students to read aloud their own and others' compositions. They will notice many errors and omissions and can correct them before handing in the papers.

3. Provide a wider audience for student writing than just the teacher. We found that mechanically the best work was done when students revised their work to be "published" on the bulletin board where the other classes would see it. Students might also write stories for younger classes, letters to the editor, and letters to students at other schools. To develop oral skills, they could be encouraged to tell stories to younger children.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should have a rationale for teaching composition and be able to explain it to students, other teachers, administrators, or parents before instruction in writing begins. The how is important, but it always depends on the what and why.

2. Stress sense impressions and the importance of observation. Instead of research--which often ends in plagiarism--concentrate on search.

3. Switch classes with other teachers for brief periods. If one teacher is particularly adept at teaching some aspect of composition, his talents can be more widely used. Also a different class--perhaps even a different grade level--might increase the enthusiasm of both teachers and students. Our students probably responded to us as eagerly as they did largely because we provided a change for them.

4. Develop a file of assignments well-received and well-done (also perhaps of those that went wrong and why). Talk with other teachers: share ideas (and horror stories). Be alert for ideas from visitors, student teachers, and colleagues from other schools and the university.

5. Perhaps the school can begin a small collection of books and periodicals to give teachers ideas and assistance in teaching composition. Suggestions are:

SLITHERY SNAKES by Walter Petty and Mary Bowen
LANGUAGE IN THOUGHT AND ACTION by S.I. Hayakawa
WISHES, LIES, AND DREAMS by Kenneth Koch
EXPLORATIONS IN CHILDREN'S WRITING, ed. by Eldonna Evertts
ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES ON COMPOSITION, ed. by Geoffrey Summerfield
ELEMENTARY ENGLISH, a periodical published by the National Council of Teachers of English

APPENDIX

A. Ginger and her Tapeworm's Hay Fever

There once was a little dog named Ginger. Well, it came to pass that Ginger had a tapeworm. One day Ginger had an upset stomach. So Ginger started eating grass. Her mother told her that when you eat grass it helps settle your stomach. Well, wouldn't you know that the tapeworm had hay fever. So when the grass reached the intestines there was a terrible disturbance. Well, Ginger just couldn't understand it. She was sure grass was to settle your stomach, so she said to herself, "Maybe I didn't eat enough."

So she ate some more grass and tried again and again.

Well, the poor tapeworm thought to himself, "I just got to get out of here."

So Ginger had a bowel movement and the tapeworm cam out through there.

The moral of this story is: If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

B. "You Greedy Thing"

"You greedy thing," said the squirrel, "No more apples, you've had two and I had two." The next day the rabbit suffered lipoma (fatty tumor).

Moral: Never ask for tumor (two more)

C.

The Unicorn's Mistake

The new-born unicorn looked curiously at the hollow tree. There was something alive moving inside. The small and helpless Unicorn stuck his head into the tree and looked down into the face of an angry skunk. The poor unfortunate beast wailed as the skunk sprayed him with his scent. The Unicorn pulled his head out of the tree crying and ran all the way home. But his mother ran away from him as did all the other animals. No one could stand the smell of the beast, so with no one to take care of him, the poor Unicorn starved that winter.

Moral: Don't let your curiosity get the best of you.

D.

Buffalo Hunter

There was a Indian. His name was Red Skin and the horse name was whitesheet and they went hunting and they were riding and they saw a buffalo and the horse was trained to help the Red Skin and what the horse would do he would stop for the Indian and the Indian would kill the buffalo and then they would rest and take the buffalo back to the tribe and have a feast and dance.

FILMS AS AN AID TO TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING

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The primary concern of a creative writing course is not films, lectures, models of good writing, or even class discussion of student writing. Although each of these items has a place, the basic concern of the course should be that each student is given the time and encouragement to write what he wants to write, honestly and amply. Unfortunately, many students enter a creative writing class with the attitude that the teacher, in some mysterious teacher way, is going to magically shoot him full of ideas and techniques that turn him into a great writer. A portion of the course is going to have to be devoted to teaching writing techniques. The use of films can assist in this process.

A second, probably more important use of films, is as motivation and inspiration for writing. The four walls of a typical high school classroom are not particularly inspiring and day after day of student writing can lead everybody into a blind alley. The world of film can solve this problem in a way that no other method can equal within the limitations of the school day.

Basic to my approach to teaching creative writing is that most of the time students write complete pieces; that is, a completed poem or story as opposed to writing an exercise to set a mood or create a character. This requires setting up the course in a way that will assure students of plenty of writing time. I would divide the course into two major segments. The first portion would attempt to suggest various ways of handling the writing of poems, short stories, and magazine articles. Covering each writing area will necessitate a sketchy approach to techniques, perhaps, but the students will have tried three quite different forms of writing. The second portion of the course would give the student much freedom to choose the forms of writing he would like to do. If he wanted to write all poems, fine, or all stories, or any combination he worked out.

Poetry is a good beginning place in a writing course. Because poems are generally short and personal, students are more willing to experiment and to express themselves honestly.

One important concept in teaching the writing of poetry is getting the students to look at the world from a different perspective, to see everyday things in a new way, and to see the implications of these new viewpoints. "Automania 2000" is a film that could help here. This cartoon is about the world of the future that contains so many automobiles that life becomes entirely centered around them. People eventually have to live in them, marooned, their food and other necessities delivered by helicopter. The film maker has looked at a familiar situation - the growing number of automobiles on the road -- and has shown it from the perspective of the future. I would show this movie after a short presentation to the class about the concept of perspective. After the movie, students would be asked to write a short poem in which they attempted to see the automobile and its associated problems from a new and unusual perspective. The teacher could help get them thinking by tossing out a number of suggestions. Perspective of visitor from outer space: are those moving objects alive? Do they get angry? Is that why they hit each other? Perspective of a pedestrian: are those drivers really human? Would they really like to run over me? Is that why they never stop until the front wheels are in the crosswalk?

Another film that could be used for this concept is "A Chairy Tale." In this film a chair refuses to be sat upon until he is treated with dignity. After viewing the film, the students would be given an assignment similar to the previous one. They would be asked to write a poem in which an inanimate object strikes a blow for his 'humanity.' Again, the teacher would suggest some ideas. How about an automobile that refuses to exceed the speed limit? A wall that resents nails being pounded into it? A door that refuses to be slammed? Record players that refuse to play songs they don't like?

One last film that could also be used to teach perspective is "Rodeo." In this film, a rodeo is presented primarily through the use of the extreme close-up shot, concentrating more on preparations than the actual event. There is one slow motion sequence of a Brahma bull ride, thus offering two new ways of looking at a familiar event. Students would be asked to select some object in the classroom, after viewing the film, that they would examine closely, trying to see things they previously missed. Or they could write a poem about people entering the classroom, each line or two a close-up view - a shoe, an elbow, and so on. The slow motion sequence suggests poems in which students might take a normally fast moving part of life - an athletic event, cars leaving the parking lot at the end of school - and stretch out the time, creating a poem which gives the effect of time slowed.

A second concept in teaching poetry writing is images, used here in its widest sense to mean any word picture, symbols, parallel, comparison or new relationship that the poet suggests to communicate his meanings. "Genesis" is a film image of the birth and death of man, a manufactured, polished creation whose life suddenly gets chopped off for no apparent reason. After viewing "Genesis," students would be asked to write a poem expressing some view of man through an extended image. Ideas the teacher could suggest might include man as a clock, man as a rat on a treadmill, man as a player in a football game, man as a rock, wall hanging, or robot. The students would attempt to build this image to present a poem about a person whose life really becomes whatever object he is dominated by.

Another film useful for images is "The Hand," a puppet film about a sculptor who refuses to make a sculpture of the large hand who is attempting to dictate to him what his art should be. By the end of the film, the hand is a symbol of repression, the sculptor a symbol of resistance. Students would be asked to look around them for the images of their everyday life that could be transformed by them into poetic symbols. Some common ones that students have come up with include school as a prison, the room speakers as 'Big Brother,' drug experiences as release and escape, and, of course, the teacher as 'the hand.'

One of the best films to get across the concept of images is "Help, My Snowman's Burning Down." In this humorous film, a man's imagination transforms his feelings about life's experiences into various pictorial images; many could also be interpreted as symbols. Students would be asked to select a single subject which they try to present using as many images as they can. The teacher could encourage a sort of stream of consciousness approach to get as many images suitable to a subject as possible. The familiar 'Happiness is...' sayings would be an obvious example of what the student would strive for here.

Another area in the first segment of a creative writing would be writing short stories and again, films can be an aid. One especially useful film for short stories is "3rd Ave El." First, it illustrates a simple plot line. Diverse characters get on and off the el, but a quarter stuck between the floor boards gives unity to the story. After having students view the film, I would work on the idea of getting them to see relationships between people who are 'accidentally' thrown together -- students in a classroom, people on a bus, in a shopping mall, at a drive-in theater. The students would be asked to work out a plot connecting four or five people in one of these settings.

The same movie could be used for teaching about characterization. Because of the way the camera lingers on details about people in the movie, our attention is directed rather obviously toward these items that cause us to form impressions about the characters. To show students how they are influenced by these details, the teacher could have them write personality sketches of the characters in the movie, based on their interpretation of the details presented in the film. They could also be asked to present a new character, using as many details about him as they feel necessary to make him believable to the audience.

Once the students have gotten the idea of a plot line and characterization, they need to be encouraged to use the kinds of details in their stories that will help create an emotional feeling on the part of the reader. "I Miss You So," a film about a woman whose husband is away at war, would help here. Most of the film consists of the details of her existence, details which emphasize her loneliness, her longing to be with him, her desire for life to return to normal. Students would be asked to list the situations in the film, and the specific incidents, that help to involve the audience emotionally. Then the students would choose a situation and describe it in a couple of pages, trying to select those details that will involve the audience emotionally with the characters.

A short film that is good for a consideration of basic plotting is "Nahanni." This is the story of an old man, who, each spring, travels alone up the Nahanni River in Canada toward the 'gold country.' The trip is arduous, and the river often turns against him, sometimes changing so much that he must turn back before reaching his destination. Still, each year, he tried again. Classified traditionally, this is a story about man vs. nature. Again, the students would choose some situation of man against nature, and build a plot line around it. In this area, desert survival stories are particularly appropriate.

If the class ever reached the point where they were ready for a more complex approach to the short story, the teacher could use "The House." This film uses a complex series of non-sequential flashbacks to trace the history of people who lived in one house over a period of about fifty years. The relationships between the characters are revealed slowly through fragmentary glimpses, and not until the end is everything clear. After a discussion with the class of the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to telling a story, the teacher would ask the students to create a story in which the sequences are not presented in chronological order of time. If there was time, students might even write the same story with the usual order of time, in order to compare the different effects on the reader.

Last, I would probably not be able to resist showing "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," based on the Aiken story of the same title. This particular film has a heavy narrative read through much of the movie, so that the story's words, powerful in themselves, are enhanced by the pictorial values. The film could be used in almost any way the teacher wanted to use it: emphasis on details of creating a character, manipulation of setting, or development of a strong plot line. I would probably use it more for enjoyment, letting the students relax and view a well-filmed story.

The magazine article is the third element I would include in the first segment of a creative writing course. Because of the wide variety of types of articles and approaches to writing an article, films are probably less helpful in this section than the others. However, there are several films that would obtain good reaction writing from the students, writing that would probably be classified more as magazine editorial writing than article writing.

"Two Yosemites," a propaganda film produced by the Sierra Club, is one-sided enough to induce strong reactions from students, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with it. It could be used simply to show to the class, then have them write a defense or attack on the film. If more time was available, students could be urged to write general ecology articles, perhaps on local issues in their community. Their articles could deal with stating the problems, ways of solving the problem, and the role of the reader.

Other movies that could be used in this same manner include: "I'm a Man," a powerful presentation of a black militant, "Harvest of Shame," a detailed view of migrant workers and their problems, and "The Sixties," a 15 minute rush through the last decade that touches a lot of bases. In this area, "Harvest of Shame" could illustrate techniques of gathering information that a couple of ambitious students might emulate to write their own article on local migrant worker camps, or an investigation of how workers are recruited locally to work in the fields. The teacher's task with each of these films would be to direct the students to local sources where they could do their own first hand research on some of these issues.

All of the above films would be used in the first segment of the course, one in which students would get very little choice about their assignments. The goal of the first segment is to give all students in the class a wider taste of various kinds of writing. In the second segment of the course, each student would be free to choose his own subjects and forms, but even here, films will play an important part. Students consistently complain about having 'no ideas' during this segment of the course, so every two or three days, a film could be shown and the students assigned to write a short poem or short prose piece, fiction or non-fiction, that the film has suggested to him. I would encourage students to keep these assignments short; then if a student writes something that he would like to develop further at his leisure, he could do so. (I think the point of a creative writing is missed when students are forced to write lengthy pieces on assigned subjects, even areas as wide as writing on anything that comes into their minds after watching a movie.)

I have used this technique with 'homemade' slide-tapes and films and the results have been good. Because of the lack of funds, I have never used this technique with professional movies, but it seems to me it would work even more successfully. My guess is that the following films would be especially useful:

"Flavio" - A study of Brazilian poverty, centering on a young boy and the drudgery of his existence.

"Dream of Wild Horses" - A slow motion view of wild horses running through water and fire. The unusual music adds to the surrealistic mood.

"Leaf" - Fall's arrival symbolized by a falling leaf, engaged in a sort of ballet of death.

NANOOK OF THE NORTH - A longer study of an Eskimo family's harsh existence.

"Children of Synanon" - A study of an unusual school for kids and parents with hang-ups. The encounter session scenes are a guarantee of stimulating student writing.

"Moods of Surfing" - A visually brilliant film that is certain to stimulate writing from our beach-conscious (though desert dwelling) students.

I imagine there are dozens of other films equally as good. For this portion of the course, the important ingredient of the film is that it be suggestive, rather than definitive.

In a creative writing course, films can expand the classroom, and can help solve the nagging question - what do we write about? Films can assist in teaching concepts. Some glorious day, perhaps teachers will have the funds available to take advantage of the interest and value that films can add to the teaching of creative writing.

THE WRITER'S LABORATORY -- ONE APPROACH TO COMPOSITION

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A funny thing happened to me on the way to a dissertation! I discovered that teaching composition can be stimulating and exciting--when composition is taught in a writer's laboratory. The lab can be just an ordinary classroom, but one with an atmosphere, a climate, which is conducive to students learning how to learn--discovering that they have something to say and developing a positive attitude toward writing.

I read THE OPEN CLASSROOM, by Herbert R. Kohl. I heard James Moffett lecture at Boston University, and I read his book, TEACHING THE UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE. I attended a reading conference where Donald Murray conducted a seminar, and I read A WRITER TEACHES WRITING.

In THE OPEN CLASSROOM, Kohl says: "Ask students what they would like to do with what is available. Suggest that they add to the richness of the environment by bringing in things they care about. Talk about what you are interested in doing yourself. There is no need to preach a non-authoritarian sermon and many reasons for not doing it. Students generally distrust all sermons, regardless of their message. An open classroom develops through the actions of the teachers and not because of his words."

In Chapter Six of TEACHING THE UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE, Moffett examines the assumption that a knowledge of grammar will improve writing, asking: What kind of knowledge of grammar? What kind of grammar? What kind of instruction? Improvement in what aspect of writing? He concluded that if correct usage is the goal, "grammar study has nothing to contribute. . . What has been rather definitely proven so far. . . is that parsing and diagramming sentences, memorizing the nomenclature and definitions of parts of speech and otherwise learning the concepts of traditional, classificatory grammar or of structural, slot-and-substitute grammar do not reduce errors." If the goal is a change in the difficulties encountered by speakers of a standard dialect, as identified by Loban, 1. inconsistency in the use of tense; 2. careless omission of words; 3. lack of syntactic clarity; 4. confusing use of pronouns; 5. trouble with agreement of subject and verb, difficulties which he says are "problems that transcend usage," Moffett recommended: ". . . the writing-workshop approach to composition provides precisely what is needed." He concludes that we learn to write by writing, not by talking about writing.

While Moffett recommends a writing-workshop approach to composition, Donald Murray describes a writing laboratory in a classroom setting: "The writing teacher must understand that he does not need a classroom; he needs a laboratory. His students must have a place where they can work, and where the teacher can also do his work, which is to encourage them individually."

Murray's writing laboratory would have a desk for each student, a teacher's private office in the laboratory, no lecturn, tables for small group conferences, bulletin boards to display writing, books on writing, a dictionary, an overhead projector, tape recorder, and adequate lighting for writing. He wrote: "The imaginative teacher can take an ordinary classroom and turn it into a writing laboratory. . . The teacher should remember that he is trying to create a climate, a place where the writer can do the job of writing. . . The student should be shown by his surroundings and the way in which the equipment he is to use is arranged that he is discovering how to write on his own, with the aid of his classmates and his teachers."

Murray said that while the teacher speaks and the students listen in the usual classroom, the reverse is true in the writing laboratory: "The students speak and the teacher listens."

> The climate of the writing workshop must encourage individual students to bring their own content to the course. During the class the students should not be passive receivers of information. They must be doers, writing and rewriting--discovering what they have to say, effectively--until the students complete the act of writing by reaching a reader who understands what they have written. . . Each student must be able to fail and try and fail and try again as he practices what he has come to understand is the normal process of the writer. Each student must face the lonely discipline of the empty page, the unsuccessful draft and the unknown reader. The class environment must place the responsibility for learning on the student so that he feels the obligation and the opportunity to teach himself. The teacher must search for methods which prevent him from interrupting the natural progress of his students. The writing teacher who teaches least usually teaches most if his students work in an environment which allows them to teach themselves.

Four years ago, with Moffett, Murray, and Kohl as "required reading", we scheduled Eh 1: The Student-Writer's Laboratory, as part of an experiment. I had two sections meeting twice a week for seventy-five minutes. During the first two weeks, we did some testing to gather data for the study; each day, some time was available to begin to create an atmosphere for writing. Students in the Laboratory were inclined, after twelve years of conditioning, to take the same seat each day, to fold their hands, and to wait for the instructor to begin the class. So I chose to be in class early, to be sitting down, and to initiate discussion about almost anything with the first students who came to class. As others arrived, I moved into their groups to try to stimulate discussion, to get an individual student to ask for help with a composition or to offer me some of his writing to read. I didn't lecture. Within two weeks we had begun to establish a kind of rapport. I was learning a few first names: students were beginning to talk with me and with other students about their writing and about ideas for additional writing. We began to establish the idea that assignments can and must come from the individual student. One must begin writing where he is, and he must write what he knows. When the instructor is in the classroom as a resource person, the students will eventually use that resource.

I did suggest that each student keep all his writing in a journal. There was no page requirement. I read what the student offered to me in conference and marked the technical errors. Students used the journals to support their self-evaluation at mid-semester and the end of the semester. The journal provides a "holder" for all writing and encourages the student to keep everything he writes. It can become one of the "secret places" where a student can say anything he wants to say and know that his idea is "safeguarded".

For years, I had taught as I had been taught: read a piece of literature and write about it; lecture; require a theme a week; copiously mark all papers, preferably in red; lecture; give several exams each semester; lecture; require a research paper; review grammar; lecture.

In 1969, I had no concrete evidence that my lecture - discuss - write - lecture - exam pattern was producing positive results; in fact, low grades, student grumbling, and the ever-present dropping of themes in the waste basket on the way out of class--after I had spend countless hours painting the themes red--suggested that my methods were producing significant negative results. Students disliked English. They wrote what was required of them, when it was assigned.

So I asked,"What ideas do TEACHING THE UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE, A WRITER TEACHES WRITING, and THE OPEN CLASSROOM express which I can apply to my composition classes?" The answer was obvious: Develop a Student-Writer's Laboratory. Writing laboratories have been mentioned in English education literature for over sixty years, but there are relatively few in existence.

The experiment began in the Fall semester, 1969, when one-half of the freshman class (control group) enrolled in Eh 1 English Composition, in a conventional, structured setting: read literature; write themes; review grammar; write exams; listen to lecture.

During the Spring semester, 1970, one-half of the freshman class (experimental group) enrolled in Eh 1, Student-Writer's Laboratory. The experimental groups met in a freely structured setting to write and to share their writing with others. We described a freely-structured setting as an atmosphere and a setting where students have freedom of choice; freedom of aims and goals; freedom of time; freedom to write or not to write, as they choose. Within this setting, there were writing tables, bulletin boards, a record player, a tape recorder, a typewriter, an overhead projector, art exhibits, and coffee. No formal presentation by the instructor was made in this setting. Students created their own assignments and made their own evaluations.

Four tests were administered to the students in the control group and in the experimental Student-Writer's Laboratory at the beginning and at the end of each semester:

1. A Composition Attitude Scale, developed by the writer.
2. WRITING SKILLS TEST, Forms A and B, Science Research Associates.
3. A Test of Exposition, Forms A and B, doctoral dissertation, Marilyn Maxwell, Boston University, 1969.
4. Initial and Final Writing Samples.

Test results for control and experimental groups are included in my doctoral dissertation, The Student-Writer's Laboratory: An Approach to Composition, Boston University, 1972, for anyone interested in statistical details. In general, we had to conclude that the conventional, structured setting is one way to teach English composition and a Student-Writer's Laboratory is another way. Both groups showed more positive attitudes toward composition, as measured by A Composition Attitude Scale, at the end of one semester; however, the experimental group post-test scores were seven points lower while the control groups post-test scores were five points lower. Both groups showed higher post-test mean scores on the WRITING SKILLS TEST and on A Test of Exposition. The average gain in mean score on the Final Writing Sample, evaluated by four raters working individually using the E.R. Steinberg Rating Scale was 1.83 points for the control group and 3.83 points for the experimental group.

I was particularly interested in developing more positive attitudes toward composition so the lower mean scores on A Composition Attitude Scale by members of the experimental group were significant to me. Skills, as measured by the WRITING SKILLS TEST, Forms A and B, apparently are learned, whether they are presented formally or informally. A Test of Exposition is primarily a reading test. All students were given the same stimulus for each writing sample. A two-point gain in mean scores is not large, but it is satisfying, more than a loss would be.

Most important, we were interested in changing students' attitudes toward composition, in fact, toward English. As part of a mid-term evaluation, one student wrote:

"My first feelings about the class were ones of insecurity. It is not difficult to realize why I felt insecure when all of a sudden after nearly thirteen years of being pressured the pressure suddenly stopped. I felt entirely uncomfortable in the class as there was none of the order to which I was accustomed."

And another student: "The laboratory has been a new classroom experience for me. I fully agree with this type of class because of the atmosphere it puts the student in. The more casual the class, the more a student is able to concentrate on his own ideas. This characteristic is important in a composition class where the purpose is to develop and bring forth one's personal writing abilities. This type of classroom situation not only develops a person's writing ability, but also his individualism, responsibility, and conscience."

A third student expressed his attitude toward the Laboratory in a conversation which went like this:

"I've been wondering about my mid-semester grade. You can read this if you want to. I've never had to write much before. And I never wrote anything like this. I always wrote what someone told me to."

"What made you decide on this idea?"

"I saw something on television which had a story like this so I decided to see if I could write the same thing. Remember, I've never tried anything like this before."

The narrative was a good beginning for a student who had always been told exactly what to write, if he had to do any writing at all. Two short, personal essays were tucked into the folder after the narrative. The student offered both of them for me to read. Then there was a verse form, almost what one might call a poem.

"May I read this?"

"Yes, if you want to. It's the first poem I ever tried. I never had a chance to do anything like this before so I decided I'd see what I could do."

We talked about the attitude expressed in the verse and about the use of descriptive words: sweet, breezy.

"Why did you use the modifiers in the first and second stanzas as you did and change in the third?"

"I don't know; I think I wanted to show a difference between the ideas. The idea in the third verse is harder than the ideas in the other verses."

We talked a bit more, about ideas for writing and about the Laboratory in general.

"I didn't think I'd like this class when I came in. I guess I was afraid, a little. I wasn't sure I'd have anything to say. I had never had an opportunity to write anything I wanted to. But I like the class. I'm always here."

Sandra Smith, a close friend of mine and a junior at the University of Maine at Presque Isle at the time of the experiment, observed the Student-Writer's Laboratory nearly every Tuesday and Thursday. Asked to make some observations about the Laboratory, she wrote:

> It was my privilege to see the Student-Writer's Laboratory from a unique perspective. As an older student, I sat in the writer's traditional English Composition class in 1967-1968. It was the usual English Composition class in which one had a textbook, read certain selections, wrote an essay every other week and a term paper each semester. I enjoyed the class because

> I was returning to school after twenty years of raising a family and I was enthusiastic about school in general. The instructor tried to make the subject matter interesting. He was well-prepared with ideas to discuss, but the students dozed, yawned behind their hands, and wrote letters. The "discussion" began and ended with the instructor. Since grades came from him, the students tried to avoid letting him know how bored and frustrated they were; but I heard it all. They were bored with the irrelevance to their lives. They were frustrated because of poor grades. What the instructor expected of them was a well-preserved mystery. Though they thought they wrote adequately, he failed to agree.
>
> I have since concluded, from a mother's point of view, that any serious creative literary work becomes a real part of the writer. The red pencil is the cruel, abortive instrument used to destroy one's literary progeny and, in turn, one's confidence in his ability to produce anything other than malformation. Yet, I read some of those miserable papers; those students could not write. Is the solution to teach them they can't write or to teach them how to write?
>
> Two years later, my son, a college freshman, was enrolled in the Student-Writer's Laboratory. I was then a junior, majoring in English. Though Nathan had had a fine teacher, he had slept through high school English. He didn't sleep in the Laboratory; he was "turned on" and "turned in". Though there was no attendance requirement and his 9:30 a.m. class was the only one he had Tuesday and Thursday, he missed only one class during the semester. He began to discuss current issues, to take an interest in contemporary magazines, and, above all, his writing improved. Even if his writing had not improved, more important, his attitude toward English changed; he was willing to write, and he liked both the class and the instructor.
>
> I must compare his attitude with the attitudes of my classmates two years earlier. These students, captive by attendance regulations, hated the class, blamed the instructor, and left with a strong dislike for composition and English in general. For my son's class, English Composition was fun; it was their class. These students were required to take responsibility for their own learning, a step toward intellectual maturity. I am convinced that the Student-Writer's Laboratory works; I have seen it works, with my son and with several of his classmates. I plan to try some variation of this idea with my English classes when I teach.

What, then, are the ingredients of a writer's laboratory? Does an open classroom constitute a writing laboratory? Is it the varied stimuli which surround the student, or the guests who come to the laboratory, or is it the instructor?

The open classroom situation is important, especially in developing positive attitudes toward writing. The setting, the atmosphere, reasonably created, is conducive to writing and, thus, to positive attitudes toward writing. For mid-term evaluation, one student wrote:

> I came here with the idea it wouldn't work. I doubted your ideas. But as the semester has passed, my attitude toward the Student-Writer's Laboratory has changed. I realize now that the new program is a great help in finding one's ability to write; and it helps one to improve in areas where he is weak.
>
> The Student-Writer's Laboratory wouldn't work for me at first because I didn't go along with the idea. But the lab can work if the student works to the best of his ability. Having done so, the student can then evaluate himself honestly.

> After I made up my mind to go along with the program, I had to decide what type of writing I would do. I tried short stories and essays. Now I am trying to write poetry. The lab has helped me greatly in my efforts. Now all I have to do is carry out the meanings of two words that my senior English teacher told me: discipline and responsibility.

From my point of view as the instructor in the laboratory, this student developed a positive attitude toward writing and did so by capturing the spirit of the atmosphere. Late in the semester, he presented a visual display of his poetry, with pictures and art work. He recommended two films which he thought would be interesting to the class; we rented the films and he had a chance to show them to the class.

At mid-semester, another student wrote:

> The Student-Writer's Laboratory is quite different. The atmosphere is totally different from a classroom situation. This is why a person may have an easier time writing or getting interested in things to write about. Although there may be different attitudes toward writing in this situation or that situation, a person after a while will gain a sense of ability--that he can write, and write well, with an atmosphere that may inspire him.
>
> The one thing a person can notice and like is the non-classroom atmosphere--talking and listening to other people's ideas, without being bothered by discipline. I like this; I have never had this situation before.

This student did not seem to make any great achievement while he was enrolled in the Writer's Laboratory, but his attitude toward writing was expressed in a positive fashion. He scored 116 on the pre-test and 114 on the post-test, A Composition Attitude Scale. He never created a visual display for the classroom; yet, he was nearly always in attendance, and he stayed around long after the class period was over.

Not every student finds merit in attempting to create an atmosphere for writing. One wrote:

> I feel that the lab is a good thing. The ideas the lab presents appear to be very good. It does give an excellent opportunity for people to get together and exchange ideas and thoughts, and I do feel that there is room for stimulus.
>
> However, I, personally, have not obtained the least little bit of stimulus from it. I cannot possibly write in a room where the stereo is playing rather loudly; nor can I write in a room where all the people around me are talking. As a result, I have done all of my writing outside the lab. I feel that if there were a "quiet" room included in the Student-Writer's Lab, it would make for a better place to write.

Several students found it difficult to write in a room with a high noise level. I usually recommended that they stay in the lab for a while and go to the library, to the dorm, or home, if any of these places offered a more conducive atmosphere. This student, however, returned to the laboratory nearly every day, sitting, reading, talking with the instructor, but seldom with other members of the class. He rebelled openly to the absence of assignments. He knew he could write anything which the instructor required of him, for he had done that during high school and had been quite successful in composition. He never did begin to create assignments for himself while he was enrolled in the laboratory. At the end of one semester of composition, he had evaluated his work as "B", saying:

"Since I don't like to write in the first place, I didn't write much; but, if I am told to do a specific assignment, I always do it. If I am not pressured to write, I will not waste my time on it."

This student scored 146, second highest among 70 scores ranging from 150 to 114 on A Composition Attitude Scale, pre-test. I believe he left the Laboratory situation feeling his attitudes toward composition remained the same and were not changed after one semester; yet his post-test score on the same scale was 131, suggesting a change toward more positive attitudes toward composition during the semester.

The pros and cons of creating an atmosphere in a writing laboratory could go on and on, each member of a laboratory expressing something he liked or did not like in the setting, expressing attitudes toward the laboratory and its open classroom concept. Of most importance, it seems, is the fact that more positive attitudes can be developed in this kind of situation.

One student showed the most positive attitudes toward composition, measured by A Composition Attitude Scale at the beginning of the semester, and made a significant gain during the semester. The score at the beginning of the semester was 114; at the end of the semester it was 94. Concerning the Laboratory, the student wrote:

> I've had fun in composition class. I've never had a class that puts so little pressure on a person. I can write much better and much more if I'm not told was and when to write. So far I've written six poems, two sort of essays, a short story, and something else which I call a Prayer for Love. I've also started two other short stories but I can't get motivated enough to finish them just yet.
>
> I liked the times when people came in almost as much as the free times. They are talented, I wish we could have more guests.
>
> I haven't made up my board yet, but I'm still trying to think of something to do it on. So many people have chosen about the same things which are easy to do. I want to be different.
>
> On the whole I think I've done quite well in my writing, although all my poems tend to rhyme. Next half-semester, I'm going to try to write some poems which don't rhyme.

At the end of the semester, the same student said she had written about 40 pages during the semester and she considered that was more than she would have written if she had been given ten specific assignments. "Well, I've written more than ten pieces of writing; and although some are poems, they are still written as a composition assignment would have been."

"My visual display was made up of four pieces of large cardboard. On each piece I taped several pictures and captioned them with song titles or parts of songs. I thought the visual display was a very good assignment. The kids came up with some really good ideas which made us all think a little bit more."

"I think the whole class is nice. It's relaxing, and it eases tension of school, if only for a little while. It's great."

This student evaluated herself as an "A" student. Perhaps she would not have fared quite so well in a more structured setting. Her papers needed some proof-reading which she never really settled down to do. As the instructor, I made corrections, helping her to make her papers look better when she dittoed them for the class. Most important, I believe, is her image of herself and the attitudes toward composition which she demonstrated.

In addition to the creating of an atmosphere, a setting, for composition, I believe it is necessary to give students who enroll freedom to determine how the course will develop and to require them to be responsible for directing the class. Students who have not been involved previously in any kind of open classroom may be insecure, even frightened, by this freedom; many students, regardless of their earlier experience may not want to accept responsibility for the leading of the class situations. The instructor is there to guide and encourage, to suggest ideas for further discussions, and to manipulate, if necessary, the people and materials who are in class on a given day so that something of value may result, at least for one or two students. Students sense very early that two prime ingredients in a Writer's Laboratory are freedom and responsibility. One wrote:

> I've loved the freedom this course has given me, to do what I want, to learn about a subject I am interested in and at the rate I am able to pursue it. I have done a more thorough job of researching my paper than I could have done if I had a deadline.
>
> I like the course more than I had anticipated. I like talking to the other students, listening to their ideas and learning what is important to them. The special programs were great and brought new, fresh ideas to me.
>
> I find myself giving a lot more thought to the paper I am doing, going into it in much more depth than I would have if the subject had been assigned by the instructor.
>
> I've attended every class simply because I like being here. I know I've received so much more from the class than I've given to it.
>
> I still feel somewhat uneasy about not turning in a lot of work. It's hard to take the responsibility for your own assignments.
>
> I would like to see this type of freedom extended to some other courses at this college.

Another student commented in a final evaluation:

> The Student-Writer's Lab has been, for me, a unique and enriching experience. I put much more of myself into this course than any other because there were no strict requirements to fill and I found myself making time to write because there was a question of self-fulfillment involved which wouldn't have been present in a stilted atmosphere. Everyone has something to say or something to share, but not everyone can express himself in a conventional classroom. The Lab provided an opportunity for these people and anyone else who takes his responsibility to work seriously to develop and use his creativity. There will always be some people who won't work as they should, but they are probably the people who do not perform in any kind of classroom atmosphere; so they are to be expected. It's what one person accomplishes in the Writer's Laboratory that's important. I know I profited from the experience.

Who, then, is responsible for what happens in an open classroom, in this case a writer's laboratory; and how do all the ingredients which are integral get poured in and stirred? I suggest that the instructor is a vital ingredient and that it is he who "pours" and "stirs". He is in this sense a catalyst, starting a reaction and helping that reaction to continue easily. He is a resource person.

I came to the Student-Writer's Laboratory after teaching twelve years in a highly structured setting. When I taught English Composition, I gave the assignments and I insisted that the papers be passed in on time, at the beginning of the class period. Students did not ask me to accept late papers. I read every paper and made copious marks, in red, through every margin. I saw students sleep in class. I watched as they filed out of class, dropping the freshly inked papers in the trash. I had time for individual conferences, but few people ever showed up to talk. When a student came to my office, he usually turned out to be one of the better ones in the class.

Perhaps some of these earlier attitudes toward teaching English Composition lent themselves to my acceptance of the idea of the open classroom, to my involvement with the concept that we learn to write by writing, not by talk about writing. We learn to write by indulging in the very act, not by reading what someone else has written. We learn to write as we see other people write and realize that others have problems with writing, not as we live in isolation, thinking that our problems belong to us alone, that our paper is the only one which is returned having been completely immersed in the instructor's blood.

When I planned and organized the Student-Writer's Laboratory, I was determined that it would succeed, that students would find something there to interest them so they would keep returning. Looking back, I don't believe it was the possibility of giving themselves a high grade for very little work, or the lack of letter grades on papers, or the absence of assignments which kept them coming to class. What was it? Enthusiasm, perhaps. And enthusiasm begins with the instructor. This ingredient is not unique to a writer's laboratory, of course. It is not peculiar only to open classrooms. It can be included in any form of education. When it is evident, students will experience change, in their attitudes and in their behavior.

In the Laboratory, I tried to motivate students to write, more and more and more, that through the process of writing they might improve their skills, their style, their sentence structure; and I wanted them to enjoy what they were doing. I never presented a formal lecture, but I called someone's attention to zillions of aspects of the mechanics of writing, every day I was in the classroom. I never put a letter grade on a paper, but any student who offered me a paper to read knew, when he finished conferring with me, whether I believed he was doing the best he could do or if there was room for more work in the piece he brought for me to see. I never assigned a piece of work to be due on a certain date, yet nearly every student was working on some assignment, of his own making. No one had to read an assignment in the text, but we wore out every copy of SATURDAY REVIEW, NEWSWEEK, ATLANTIC MONTHLY, THE NEW YORKER, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, and any other magazine we had money enough to buy. Visual displays weren't absolutely essential to the class; no one expected to get an "A" if he had done a display and no writing. Only three students among 70 made no effort to create an atmosphere through collages, mobiles, pictures with poetry, or any other idea which was meaningful to an individual.

Some who do not believe in freedom and responsibility in the classroom may wonder why one bothers with a writer's laboratory. The evidence is in from one small experiment; the differences between two groups of students after one semester, one group having experienced English Composition in a structured, conventional setting and one group having been in an atmospheric, laboratory setting, are not great. Both groups showed more positive attitudes toward composition; the structured setting group showed higher mean gains on a skills test; the laboratory group showed higher mean gains on a final writing sample. With so little difference between the groups, why make any change?

Dr. Albert W. Purvis, Dean of Instruction at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, approved the Student-Writer's Laboratory as the course in English Composition, saying that he believed in our being"involved in something new for a change." He adjusted schedules to meet the Laboratory hours and has watched the classroom activities with much interest during three semesters.

Dr. Robert S. Fay, Boston University School of Education drove to Presque Isle to visit the Student-Writer's Laboratory one full day. He has indicated that he could feel the atmosphere created for the Laboratory and sensed a "spirit", something perhaps not quite tangible, existing in the Laboratory.

It is possible, then, that one cannot measure all that has happened through the Student-Writer's Laboratory. We may need much more time before we see and feel the full impact of this approach to composition. One instructor at the University of Maine at Presque Isle believes there is unmeasurable change:

> My initial scepticism concerning the experimental writer's laboratory is slowly giving way to rather strong interest in this approach to composition.
>
> This is the first semester I have worked with students who have experienced the laboratory environment prior to the Eh 5: The Experience of Literature; from early semester observations, I make the following tentative observations:
>
> The students I have this semester have exhibited
>
> 1. Greater clarity of prose style than in previous semesters.
> 2. Less hostility towards the genre of poetry and greater willingness to experiment with their own verse. This is significant because the ratio of non-English majors has remained essentially the same as in other semesters, but this section has a far more flexible attitude than I have seen in the past.
> 3. The aspect of attitude brings me to the most significant point: the students this semester have confidence in their own judgments and in their vision of themselves. While many classes "expose students to ideas", the Lab has exposed them to their own imaginations; at least this seems to be the feeling of many members of the class. They are more tolerant, more sensitive to "different" ideas, more questioning, less frightened of the possibility of failure--and a hell of a lot more fun.
>
> I don't know that the change in attitude is a direct result of their Eh 1 experience; but I don't know that it isn't either. It is quite apparent, however, that something interesting has happened.

Dr. George W. Bowman, Chairman of the Division of Humanities at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, encouraged this experimentation from the beginning, saying that if we did nothing else, we might influence the attitudes which students have toward composition. Dr. Bowman followed the program closely, daily, and has spoken on several occasions, calling the attention of many to the Writer's Laboratory. When asked to comment on the impact of the Writer's Laboratory, he wrote:

> The freshman Writer's Laboratory has been a noteworthy success in my view because of the influence it has had upon the total educational atmosphere of the college. I have been pleased with the response of students in my classes who had participated in the laboratory experience. These students no longer merely came to class to be taught, but bring more to it, feeling more responsible for their own education. These students also have a changed attitude towards assigned papers. Since writing their ideas on a variety of subjects has been a part of their laboratory experience, the writing of papers seems a natural part of any course.
>
> Because the practice of consultation with the instructor in the laboratory becomes a natural experience, I find that those students in other courses much more freely and frequently seek conferences with me; I become a consultant, not a lecturer. Students and faculty in other disciplines

of the college speak highly of the laboratory experiences. As a result, writing becomes no longer an English department monopoly, and students no longer feel that they write one way for English classes and another way, if at all, for other courses.

The program has also had a beneficial effect upon other teachers in the college. Since the success of the writer's laboratory, many faculty members, in our division and in others, have talked with me about new approaches to their own courses which utilize the techniques of the laboratory--informality, group action, incentive devices, and individual projects, among others.

One other fringe benefit from the program has interested me. The atmosphere of the writer's laboratory has apparently been so effective that I notice that the room itself has become a center for study, informal discussions, and other activities. The facility is rarely empty. There is a typewriter available and in almost constant use; the books, periodicals, and visual displays attract many students. The students who have experienced the Freshman Writer's Laboratory have apparently found an atmosphere conducive to study, learning, and creative endeavor.

There is no limit to the use which can be made of a writing laboratory in teaching composition. Since we learn to write by writing, the concept of opportunities for writing can be effected at any grade level. Since we are not requiring anything in addition to a regular classroom, anyone who has a classroom can create a writing laboratory.

The ideas are the same at every level; make opportunities for writing; encourage students; mark their papers, talk about mechanics and development of ideas, but sprinkle large portions of praise; show off each student's writings, among his peers and to other faculty members; create bulletin boards for displays of student writing. In the middle school, junior high school, and high school, share writings through dittoed sheets and literary magazines. Encourage students to submit their writings for publication. Where positive attitudes toward composition exist, capitalize on them; where negative attitudes toward composition persist, appeal to the student's ego. Build his self-image through success in writing.

There is no limit for the writing laboratory. It can be modified and made to work at every grade level. It requires a high degree of teacher commitment, personal involvement, and the willingness to adapt to change. Many days one will have to rely on process, rather than a product. If the goal of education is the facility of learning, a student is educated when he learns how to learn, or, in this case, when he learns how to write. And he learns to write by writing, not by talking about it, not by "playing with the pieces".

So, schedule a Writer's Lab two days each week. No lectures; the class time belongs to the students, to write, to talk, to confer with the teacher, to prepare visual displays. Provide a stereo, the students will bring enough records. Mark papers, but don't grade them. Let the students evaluate themselves and each other. Bring in interesting guests. Every community has an abundance if you will only look around: perhaps a painter, someone who has traveled, a folk singer. Guests do not have to be writers or in any way associated with education.

Develop the idea of journal writing where quantity is measured and quality is hoped for. Require a specific number of entries each week. Encourage a literary sheet, a "throw-away", even if you do all the work initially. Don't read every word each student writes; read what is offered to you. Save your eyes for other activities.

And have patience. Be prepared to wait for results. They will come. You will see more writing.

You will sense a change in students' attitudes toward English. You will be exhausted at the end of the day, even more so than usual. But it will be worth the extra effort. You will be present where writing is being done, where students are excited about their own ideas; and their excitement will be contagious.

Start today!

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BACKYARDS I HAVE KNOWN AND LOVED--AND WHY

Carol V. Crawford, Arvada West High School, Arvada, Colorado

That ugly, pallid gray which children quite naturally dislike still colors the house of my childhood. The house was an awkward, two-storied hulk with great tall windows edged in white. A dirt and gravel driveway inclined sharply from the street between the arbor-vitae hedge on the property line and the red stone retaining wall which kept the front lawn from sliding into the street. Then, rutted and packed, the drive ran true with the hedge into the backyard, halted, in one direction, by a single car garage as wooden and gray as the house, at the back of the property line, and at a ninety degree angle across the property to yet another garage, an afterthought of rusted black tin.

It is that very afterthought which has lead me to an analogy between some of my most pleasant memories--those spent in backyards of my own and of others--and the process of teaching composition.

This afterthought--the black ugly--was really a necessary addition to this yard. What had once, perhaps around the turn of the century, been a single-family dwelling for a prosperous dentist, his wife, and son, had yielded to the needs of two families, my own and a rather steady assortment of dear friends who lived in the Smaller Side. The dimensions of the Smaller Side included a huge living room, a huge dining room, a large kitchen, and ONLY one bedroom. At any rate, the second family additon necessitated another garage. And so, sometime before I was born, the two-by-fours were raised and covered with the large, irregular sheets of tin that line a comfortable corner of my past. I can still hear, as well as see it. It cracked like a pistol shot when I hit it with a pebble from the driveway; and on nights when that stiff Utah wind blew, it creaked and rattled like some ancient piece of machinery. Of course, no one could see the addition from the street since the house was tall and wide and framed with trees.

Across the entire width of the house in the backyard was a rectangle of cement which held three sturdy iron posts for clothes lines. Next lay the drive leading to the tin monster, and beyond that, the great green square of lawn bordered with vertical wooden fencing. The

Introductory para. Mood is set by a series of progressively longer and more complex sentences--all descriptive. Description is designed to lead the reader into the backyard in much the same way a painter leads the eye into a painting. The placement of the final phrase in the para., in apposition to "garage," underlines its importance.

Para. transitioning through pronoun and word repetition. Brevity of para. in relation to other scores its significance.

Transitioning through pronoun and word repetitions and an echoing phrase to expand the image. The 12 lines after the intro. sentence are narrative exposition.

Never begin a sentence with "And."

An impossible sentimentality. Simile

Establishes place rather discretely. "Ancient machinery" expands the image again.

The only direct transition in this para. is the jolt back to "backyard." "Tin monster" is still another expansion of the garage. It has fence had probably never been painted, but it didn't matter since much of it was covered with the wide leaves of heavy grape vines, and, in the fall, frosty purple clusters glistened against the green. There was one other stationary component of the yard that was, for me, absolutely important: a concrete incinerator about four feet square.

I remember sitting there on that concrete incinerator many hours of many days and evenings on the edge of that gaping black hole which was covered only with a loose piece of chicken wire. The morning glory tendrils and blooms growing up the concrete were as much a target of my investigations as were my adolescent dreams.

There were other less permanent accessories which were vital from time to time: the marvelous old cherry tree with the deep glowing bark which my father finally had to chop down because so many robins gorged themselves to death every spring on the blushing red but not-yet-ripe fruit; the Victory Garden along the south fence during World War II when spinach and Swiss chard and tomatoes were patriotic; the very early sandbox along the west wall of the tin monster where I built castles for my lame princess doll; the apricot tree in which my friend and I played Dorothy Lamour and Jon Hall for years after the movie, HURRICANE.

The other backyards I have come to know and love since have varied widely. There was the giant of them all in a little town in Southern Utah where I visited my cousins. Theirs was the totally utilitarian yard which only children can find beautiful. The long, straight rows of vegetables--corn, cucumber, squash, potatoes, green peas--stretched from about thirty feet behind the house out to the east property line some seventy-five yards away. Deep furrows etched the earth between the plants, and on watering day when "we" opened the small wooden gates to the little communal canal, the furrows deepened to that rich brown-black which even city children know is "good."

In that yard my substitute incinerator was a wood pile behind the garage. We sat there evenings and listened to the bright chirp of crickets that frightened me by day and we watched the moon. It was there we sat the night my aunt died. As we listened to the neighbor's dog baying, we shivered deliciously.

also established a pattern for the paper: since it is all about memory, it is necessary to draw the reader into a familiarity with the unfamiliar. Repetition can be helpful.

Actually, the beginning of this paragraph is at the end of the preceding one. However, the repetition locates the entire para.

"Other...accessories" catagorizes the garage, the cement, the lawn, the fence, & the incinerator as primary & opens the door for repetition. This is the second one-sentence paragraph: a simple base clause with one imbedded relative clause followed by four, second-level noun phrases, each with its own imbedded clause signalled by "which," "when," "where," and "in which" (3 relative and 1 subordinate).

"Other backyards + an echo of the title negates the need for a transition. We are moving on. "Southern Utah" establishes place bluntly. "Theirs": possessive pronoun substitutes for a noun. Initial sentence are again short, both as a pace shift from the long sentence before & as a lead into the new setting. Length of this sentence should emphasize the image.

Familiar (I hope) reference.

I had a devil of a time with this sequence.

At the far north-east corner of the yard, the little compound of chicken houses, rabbit hutches, and fencing--all equally weathered gray on the outside and damply brown and cool on the inside--was sheltered by the gnarled and stunted foliage of apple and plum trees. Here also, the little canal cut into "our" property and we made corn silk babies and played "king and queen" with them. All afternoon we hid there under the trees with leaf barges for our kings and queen, the motionless moving ribbon of a canal, and the chickens clucking and scratching quietly under the hot summer sun.

Years later, married, with children of my own, I had these yards in mind as I nudged my husband into an anachronism behind our first home. We were going to have long, straight rows of vegetables, great towering trees, fruit trees the robins wouldn't like, a sandbox for castles, and little private places where children can sit and listen to their thoughts. Unfortunately, our house was built upon the most unmanageable kind of clay. It would not crumble in the hands and sift richly through the fingers. With a pick-ax, my husband dislodged boulder-sized chunks of clay, wonderously ribbed with yellows and reds and greens. It was not hospitable to tulip trees and dogwood or even green peas and corn, even if the harsh Montana climate had been. Grass survived only through our determination. And when the rains came, the crafty clay sunk clear along the sewer line which also happened to be the site of our straight rows of valiant vegetables.

Our younger children ate the sand and poured it on little guests whose mothers were not amused. But the most devastating blow of all came with the realization that children don't listen to their own adolescence anymore. I had to sit in the little quiet places and listen to my own frazzled thoughts. The contemplation of a blade of grass was not nearly as compelling as the consumption of "Wyatt Erp" or "Have Gun, Will Travel," even grass born of such malevolent soil.

By the time we had moved into our second new home, I had grown older, not necessarily more mature. We knew we couldn't cope with long, straight rows of anything since the full depth of the backyard was under fifty feet from red brick back wall of the house to the painfully suburban redwood fence. There would never be a tin monster since the garage was already attached to the house. We did put in a large rectangle of cement but not for clothes lines. Instead, we

Transition: "yard."

A very simple S.V.Adv. sentence with a complex of three imbedded prepositional phrases, all signalled by the one communal "with."

The biggest jump of all, but the time transition eases the gap.
All variations of the familiar.

Tempo picks up & sentences become shorter as they move from description to exposition and narration.

Subtle geography.
Never begin a sentence with "And." "crafty AND "valiant": a bit heavy on the personification, but I'm emotionally tied to it. Counting on good memories to remember "sandbox" in preceding para. It is rather far away. Ditto for "quiet place," but they should be echoes of already familiar accessories--I hope.

The 2nd personification in as many paragraphs. Sorry! Also a big jump, but hopefully the pattern of moving from yard to yard is now well enough established to preclude confusion. Echoes: back two lines.

Contrast with earlier fences. Established echo. Echo with a twist.

slapped a roof over it, loving erected a four feet high decorator cement-block wall around it, and, in the seventh month, we rested and called the whole creation PATIO.

Our new Colorado friends and neighbors were the most generous we had ever known. They gave us "starts" of sumac and lilac and tulips and iris and poppies and oak and raspberries and juniper and wild rose and honeysuckle and pussy willow and hollyhocks. To these we added Russian olive and prunis and snowberry and violets and pansies and chrysanthemums and nasturtiums and marigolds and a sand "area" and a swing set. And grass. Considering that PATIO was covering at least one-sixth of the entire backyard area, that we could even find room to plant it all was something close to miraculous. Fortunately, only the hardiest survived. The sand area and swing set died of that pitiful disease--neglect. (One lesson I had to re-learn.) They were replaced with one last planting of corn and tomatoes and things, in rather straight, short rows. I cannot remember ever salvaging one corn baby from those puny stalks.

However, in the past few years, my most energetic season arrives every spring when the first warm Saturday descends and my husband--an intrepid worshipper of foliacide and other evils--gets a dark glint in his eye and starts surrepitiously for the backyard. His less-than-imaginative excuse is generally that it is time to clean PATIO. I have come to know that this is the signal. My objective: to beat EVIL ONE to the JUNGLE. Here, arms akimbo, I run from bush to to tree to bloom planting myself between each green thing and Father's ugly wrath. At our current rate of one sacrifice per spring, however, it will take approximately fifty years to thin the growth to what might be termed acceptable for a "normal" backyard.

We finally, just this year, have a wood pile, in anticipation of our long-awaited fireplace. Unfortunately, it is only two logs deep, although it is certainly high enough and long enough for anyone who would like to sit and meditate. The chief problem lies in its placement. It rests against the still-suburban fence and is shielded by three lovely Russian olive trees whose thin, pale green and silver leaves dance within twelve inches of the wood. I wonder if pygmies meditate?

But I am content. The continuity of experience laces my contenment. I'll never be a farmer but

Well, capital letters here isn't really personification. Not such a subtle place reference.
The "ands" are vital to the tone and implication of the passage.

Hopefully appropriate use of a sentence fragment.

Direct reference to past.

Echoes

Echoes

"However," the transition, sets up a pivotal implication here--I hope. We are turning the corner. My husband got a black glint in his eye when he read this page. He may decide to hate paper too.

"JUNGLE": metaphor, heh, heh. "Evil One"--an expansion of "worshipper of foliacide." "JUNGLE" justifies "However." Get the pun up there four lines?

"finally:" sequence transition.

Never begin a sentence with "But," let alone a

Swiss chard and radishes and brown-black furrows are a part of me. I couldn't climb an apricot tree if we had one, and somehow my Dorothy Lamour fantasies have faded anyway. My current image might be more appropriately aligned with the poor man's Auntie Mame. And those quiet places, those dear, dear places frosted with morning glories and chicken wire which I wanted to recreate for my children, are inside now. The pygmies can have the wood pile. All is well.

para. Levels of generality for this paragraph: 1,2,3,3,4, 3,4,2

AND never begin a sentence with "And."

The sentences are ebbing now, dwindling down to the short sentences that finalize the paper.

II

ANTISTROPHE

Composition U.S.A. is in trouble, was in trouble, has been in trouble, is a trouble. There are those who say it can't be taught. There are those who say it shouldn't be taught. And there are those who think they do teach it and don't, as well as those who don't "teach" it and do. There are probably as many composition programs in this country as there are schools.

The feud between the sterility of skills and sequence and the chaos of creativity rages, not only from school to school, but also between classroom and classroom. It smolders yet in my own deliberations. In lieu of a wood pile, I have perched upon books, articles, discussions with classroom teachers, parents, and students to form a more-or-less stable philosophy. Although it is still painfully susceptible to a decree from Toffler or McLuhan or Postman, or a ringing metaphor from Hogan or Farrell, I will stand on skill and sequence.

The strophe of this article articulates my attitude about a number of things other than backyards, chiefly (borrowing from a dreadfully old cliche): You can't make a Thomas Mann out of an itinerant flora fancier. On the other hand, it is possible to infuse anyone who writes with some degree of competence and skill. While many declare that the English teacher's insistence on skill learning stifles--if not totally obliterates--most students' desire to communicate in writing, the opposite, in my opinion, is equally plausible: students are inhibited in their attempts at written communication because they lack the skills to write effectively AND they know it.

"As soon as I realized no one can teach composition, I relaxed, and I've enjoyed my composition classes ever since." When I hear a line like this one, and I've heard many variations of it, I am ready to challenge Toffler and Postman and Hogan all at once: "Pistols, Summerville, at dawn!"

It is not our future literary giants who concern me; they will survive every method of sterilization we have at our disposal. It is the other ninety-nine percent of our young people who will never sign a printed article, let alone a collection of poetry or a novel. They are the ones who have been assigned the elementary school "report" on CHINA, have become familiar with the CH section of one encyclopedia, and have innocently taken those initial steps into a life of crime: plagiarism. They are the ones who are so ebullient in junior high life that their English teachers announce confidently to parents that they (the teachers) have tried to offer them (the students) a unit on skills; but, after all, they (the students?) really dislike skill study and they (the students?) have enjoyed making gum wrapper and string collages so much more. It has allowed them to express their true feelings. These are the same students whose senior high teachers have told them to read A SEPARATE PEACE and then to write a paper on the SIGNIFICANCE of the tree. Of course, there will be those few who will take the tree and run with it. But, again, for the overwhelming majority of papers, the teacher will sigh sadly, bleed or not bleed all over the page (depending upon his or her own personal philosophy), and be reassured all over again that composition can't be taught.

While the prophets cry that writing will become obsolete and we must prepare our young people for the future, I maintain that it is NOT YET obsolete and we had better also prepare them for NOW. I will grant that many young people will not spend their lives with pen in hand, but, unfortunately, there do not seem to be any prophets who can tell us which ones. I will further grant that none of us may need to write in that future racing headlong at us. However, I am one of those Neanderthals who believes that learning to get thoughts down on paper effectively has some correlation with learning to think and to speak effectively. So we won't write in the future: I doubt the efforts to learn written communication will have seriously warped the minds of the citizens of 2000 A.D. In an age vitally concerned with the survival of the INDIVIDUAL, why take away one of the methods for discovering who "I" am?

Now, having exorcised my own demons--temporarily, I shall turn to my intended topic: Some Ideas About Teaching Composition. My "Backyard" philosophy--not to be confused with a "Down Home" philosophy--was not intended to be facetious. It was an attempt to recreate the initial and subsequent experiences which have spanned over forty years and are still viable forces in my life. While I have learned the hard way that I could not recreate my experiences for our children, my husband and I have helped provide for them experiences which carry an individual continuity for each of them. It is on this basis, the basis of individual continuity, that I have built my thesis. It is not that teachers should build incinerators or wood piles just for themselves. It is not important that tin garages and sandboxes are added as they are needed and discarded when they are not. It is not that we really want our students to grow nouns and verbs and commas and subordinate clauses in long, straight rows every day for the rest of their lives. But, when the teachers build their own background vocabulary and skills, they can create a climate of understanding--a place, if you will, where communication can happen. The task is to build a sequential skill program and then to erect those afterthoughts and expediences which enhance or augment the program but do not destroy it.

Let's be specific. "Adjective" and "Adverb" are not inherently ugly words. If everyone could agree to call them "Table" and "Chair," perhaps the world would be a brighter place. But the important consideration must be that there is nothing terribly evil about giving them a name. Chemists and mathematicians can label things without turning gray worrying about the possibility of damaging their students' psyches. Home economics teachers and ski instructors are quite at home--as are their students--in the world of hemming and christies, parboiling and stem-turns, hollandaise and snow plow. If we stop playing games with children and with ourselves, there is hope. If we can become familiar enough ourselves with the terminology and the skills of writing not to be intimidated by them, then, perhaps we won't communicate our wholesale aversion to our students. I spent my first few years of teaching writing "awkward" all down the margins of papers, both because I wasn't sure of exactly what was wrong, wasn't sure of the terminology, and was very sure the students didn't know it either! If we let our students know what we expect of them and if we communicate the nature of sequence to them and the necessity of reaching this step before attempting the next, then they might surprise us all. I agree with Robert Rosenthal who has been telling us that students perform according to teacher expectations. If we expect that they will be able to identify nouns and verbs, not just by some pat little definition but by function, then they will. Of course, at this point, they won't write "better" yet.

Sentence pattern study need not be a pedantic little crutch for teachers to badger students. Patterns can open doors to how we think, as well as to what is the essence of what we call a sentence. As long as patterns are not taught as an end in themselves, but rather as a mere step towards identifying what the students have been using since they began to talk, then the students can begin making some conscious choices when they write. Better these be initiated early, but if they haven't been, then, in my opinion, it is better to take the time with entering high school students than to curse the dark. (Cliche.) A solid program of sentence expansion and modification is an appropriate, sequential follow-up to patterns. It allows many students to understand coordination and subordination BEFORE they wrestle with that larger unit, the paragraph. It is an excellent time to teach punctuation since the need to understand commas and dashes and semi-colons in sentence modification is genuine. It is more productive to discuss participial phrases as misplaced modifiers when the student has some idea what one is than when he comes upon the concept cold. There can be no better time to illuminate parallelism than when the student has the terminology to grasp this structural concept. This study of expansion and modification should be as systematically and sequentially presented as the patterns. The alternatives should be built slowly, giving the students ample time to be comfortable both with identification and with generation.

Once the concept of coordination and subordination is firmly established, the tortures of whole paragraphs of topic sentences are quickly dissipated, and, in turn, the understanding of the thesis or controlling statement in the full paper can be accomplished with a minimum of bloodshed.

Then--and only then--there is time for discussion and generation of those effects which can be useful to the person who writes sentences and paragraphs and themes: definition, cause-effect, comparison/contrast, analysis, etc. Again, these too are only tools, not ends in themselves.

My reasons for annotating my "essay" in this article were, perhaps, too obvious, but I'll comment anyway. At the risk of sounding repetitious, I must say again that, from my point of view, vocabulary about writing need not intimidate students. Aside from my little witticisms and cynicisms, many of our students who are well into our composition program would be at least minimally aware of what I was talking about, and could, in numbers of cases, generate their own sentences and paragraphs on the concepts I have mentioned. It has been fascinating to watch our students who come to our Composition Lab to discuss the specific writing assignments of the composition teachers. For the most part, these students are comfortable discussing embedded vs. free modifiers, the choice between noun phrase modifiers and the prepositional phrase modifiers. Infinitives and participles--past and present--don't always confuse them. And very often, even with long, involved sentences, they can tell the kind (not necessarily the number) of sentence pattern involved in the basic sentence. As a result of all this, some of their problems with punctuation are clearing up. And, even our lay readers, less emotionally involved than the teachers, report the students are writing better sentences and better paragraphs and better papers. They are more at home with their own language.

Now, I would be the first to agree that strict grammar study does nothing to help students write. BUT I would also be among those who say that a vocabulary about writing can be of tremendous value. It is valuable to be able to say to the student, "You have a series of short, choppy sentences here. Why don't you combine the action of these in a series of modifying verb phrases." If the student has no common vocabulary with the teacher, the task both of explaining and of understanding must become more difficult. Furthermore, if the teacher simply writes, "A series of topic sentences--rewrite," in the margin and leaves the student to discover how, many will never find out. No serious, sequential program involving skills is fail proof, but, at the very least, it can be an honest attempt to give students a way to grapple with their language.

"And what about IDEAS???" many may rightly ask. "Ah, yes," I must answer with an all-but-imperceptible catch in my voice. I suppose I shall never be quite accountable to any legislature, because I am first accountable to students. I can help them with those skills that will allow them to communicate in writing. I cannot infect them with ideas. The sum total of all their lives in schools and in families and in churches and in movies and with friends and on jobs and at TV must share in the responsibility of helping them to perceive their own long, straight rows of vegetables, their own brown-black furrows, their own crickets, and moons, and incinerators, and tin monsters. I can listen to them, draw them out, help them realize what they have to say and to write is important; but unless I have helped them to write it more effectively, then I have not helped them at all.

IT'S ALL IN THE BOX

Sue Hardesty, Chandler High School and Nel Ward, West High School, Phoenix

Each year the world whirls faster and students are less willing to quietly wait for programming for the next set of instructions in a classroom. (Maybe they never were!) Classes in composition are well known for writing but not much other activity. To involve the students further, to keep them from becoming restless, individualize. But how?

Ask five people to explain individualized teaching (and/or learning), and you will probably get five different answers. "Individualizing is assigning a topic and letting students use different words--maybe even different ideas," one teacher might state. Maybe that's a beginning, but more complete individualized teaching means providing students with sufficient materials and opportunities so that they can procede as fast as they wish in their learning, using the methods that they find most adapted to their personalities and abilities.

Allowing students this kind of "freedom" requires some sort of organization by the teacher in order to provide separate instruction for each one of the vast audience in the classroom waiting to be amused. A possible way is to collect all the exercises that you want to use with your students and make an "If You Care" box from each activity.

In order for students to learn, they must care. Therefore when they become interested in a specific area of writing--in other words, "if they care" about one particular aspect of writing--they can then check out a box with a learning experience that applies to that interest. One example of an activity that can be used in such a box deals with figurative language. This particular activity can be worked with an individual or a small group of students. In fact, it can be used with an entire class, but all of them may not feel like doing this activity on any given day. Collect a number of objects that will appeal to one of the five senses: textures, smells, tastes, images, and sounds. The students involve themselves in these experiences, preferably blindfolded. Students can work in pairs and help each other. After these sensory perceptions, students write figures of speech, attempting to create fresh language patterns.

You probably have a number of activities that can be confined within a box for a period of time before students decide to explore the learning contents. Once the students enjoy an activity (if a few of them care), they will "sell" the activities to other students in the class who are watching. Checking out the materials can be done by the students themselves, or perhaps by a student assistant or helper. At first you might use these boxes as supplement to the textbook; later the entire curriculum might operate on an individualized basis.

Ideas for the boxes can also result from products already on the commercial market. David Sohn's COME TO YOUR SENSES is a collection of photographs which could be used as a basis for descriptive compositions. From Scholastic comes a unit on "Fortune-Tellers" that can be used in small groups. This is designed to last two weeks but could be compressed. Certain material could be deleted. And a fun source for working with parts of speech is a series called "Mad Libs" from Price/Stern/Sloan, Publishers, which provides the basis of stories--newspaper stories and ads, short articles, jokes, etc.--which call for individuals to fill in nouns, adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech. Perhaps the most eye-catching series yet produced is Houghton-Mifflin's THE WRITE THING, which combines a variety of experiences (both aural and visual) for the students to work with in their writings. If one teaching method doesn't work with a group of students, another might. If students can check out a teaching method that works with them, the result might be improved interest and writing.

In the beginning, "If You Care" boxes are time-consuming to set up. But they just might pay off. If you organize these materials before the class is in session, you will have more time to work with students because you need less time to prepare. Audio tapes, drawings and photographs, activities--all these can involve students if your materials are relevant and involving.

Why should you go to this trouble? Students feel more important when teaching is individualized. And they seem to work better when they feel that they have value. "If You Care," maybe your students will.

TEACHING WRITING TO THE NEW STUDENTS OF THE '70s AND '80s

Russ Larson, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Last year one of my colleagues stopped me and asked if I had read Patricia Cross article on "The New Learners" in CHANGE. Unfortunately, my copy was buried beneath forty-five Shakespeare papers. "Read," he said. "This article is important." I read and found myself involved in a philosophical problem that plagues education in general and English teachers in particular. Should education, particularly university education, be elitist or egalitarian?

In both "The New Learners" and her book, BEYOND THE OPEN DOOR, Cross argues that college students during the '70s will come from a wide variety of backgrounds, will not be well prepared academically, and will require a variety of new programs to meet their needs. Her thesis: "The way to raise the standard of living for everyone is no longer to train leaders but rather to educate the masses to their full humanity." ("The New Learners," CHANGE, February 1973, p. 31) On the other hand, the elitist view that has dominated the university favors educating only the brightest, the most deserving intellectually. Only the best students should receive college degrees. Thus Cross" egalitarianism seems unorthodox.

Yet Cross' thesis is not a new goal for education. In ON LIBERTY, for instance, John Stuart Mill favors "diversity of education," by which he means a variety of educational patters established by a variety of groups. (ON LIBERTY AND OTHER ESSAYS, NY: Macmillan, 1926, p. 126) He also argues that

> in proportion to the development of his individuality, each person becomes more valuable to himself, and is therefore capable of being more valuable to others. There is a greater fullness of life about his own existence, and when there is more life in the units there is more in the mass which is composed of them. (ON LIBERTY AND OTHER ESSAYS, NY: Macmillan, 1926, p. 74)

To an educator such as Cross who has extended Mill's view to higher education, the university becomes less a place where man quests for Truth, for the Platonic essence, than a complicated mosaic in which each person finds an individual fulfillment. As each person finds fulfillment, the texture and hue of the university, and ultimately of society, become richer.

The student body at Eastern Michigan University during the '60s and '70s, moreover, has become a mosaic. Eastern Michigan has the bright student, the student virtually capable of educating himself, but it has students who would not have been enrolled several years ago. Housewives, factory workers, and minority groups make up a growing percentage of the student body. More children of blue collar workers and of financially successful but poorly educated white collar workers are also attending Eastern Michigan. And implicit in this change in population lies an even more significant change: Eastern Michigan University is admitting more educationally handicapped students, students who have relatively poor academic backgrounds and often basic deficiencies in language skills. These are, to use Cross' terminology, the "New Students of the '70s," ("New Students of the '70s," THE RESEARCH REPORTER, VI 1971, pp. 1-5) and since this egalitarian movement in higher education is growing stronger, they are likely to be the students of the '80s.

If older students are not considered, some tentative generalizations about these new students of the '70s and '80s hold up relatively well.

(1) As previously stated, they have basic deficiencies in language skills, particularly in reading.

(2) In addition, they often lack confidence in themselves; they suspect they will not do well in college and are quick to give up if they believe they are failing.
(3) Similarly, many expect little from the university; they believe they will fail not only because they distrust themselves but also because they distrust the educational process. When THE GRADUATE was recently shown on campus, the loudest cheers occurred when the "graduate" told his father that getting a college degree had been a waste.
(4) These students often either lack a clear sense of direction or fail to choose goals that reflect actual potential. How does an adviser help a student who in high school received D's in math and failed his only science course but who wants to become a medical technician? How does he advise a student with a good nonverbal IQ but a very low reading level who wants to be a lawyer? Even granting the potential for growth, many of these students will founder on poorly chosen programs.
(5) They generally lack good study habits and the self-discipline basic to developing such habits without assistance.
(6) Finally, many lack an educational tradition; that is, their parents often know little about higher education and consequently make poor advisers and confidantes.

In other words, these students are more similar to the typical high school student than to the bright, competent, confident, motivated, self-disciplined college freshman that elitists prefer. And they have to be educated taking into account the same basic educational issues that high school teachers have long been aware of: building basic skills, increasing confidence, motivating, developing self-discipline. As a result, the teacher of freshman composition finds his role has changed; he once assumed that he need only present information clearly, but he now begins by assuming he must cause his students to learn.

Eastern Michigan University has responded to this situation by setting up a special program for students with skills deficiencies called PASS (an acronym for Provisionally Admitted Special Students). The program has four basic emphases: (1) diagnosis of skills deficiencies, (2) teaching designed to compensate for these deficiencies, (3) reduction of anxiety and building self-confidence, and (4) special advising and counseling. When students apply, the academically weak are provisionally admitted. If they do decide to enroll, they are given diagnostic tests to gain specific information on reading and writing deficiencies. This information is later used to make sure they receive special support in weak areas. During advising, they are tracked into special sections that are smaller than regular university classes, giving the teachers more time to work with individual students. The teachers, who are volunteers, are better able to diagnose and treat particular problems, for they know precisely what kind of students they are teaching. The students recognize that the program has been set up to benefit them, that special tutoring and counseling are available, and that they must consequently assume much of the responsibility for their success or failure. They know that if they work they can succeed, but that because the program has been set up to educate them, not simply to retain them in school, they must perform. Finally, everyone knows that emphasis has been taken off initial competence and shifted toward competence at graduation.

Within this larger framework, the English Department has been charged with developing a program that will cause these students to write more effectively, for although the majority of them will not major in traditional disciplines that focus upon the study of ideas, all of them will need to write competently. In addition, although teaching conditions vary significantly between high school and college, this program emphasizes the same skills that high school teachers emphasize and uses methods that high school teachers use. The following statements represent a consensus view of the program.

To develop the writing skills of the new students of the '70s and '80s, the teacher must first recognize that his students cannot be passive. In other words, as long as the teacher is a dispenser of information and his students are merely recipients, he will not effectively cause them to learn. The reason: Writing is an activity, and the test of a student's knowledge rests in application, in his ability to write and to evaluate what he has written. He will learn the skills of the writer through active experimentation, through application of ideas and principles, not through memorization, not through listening to theoretical statements about writing.

To cause students to write more skillfully, the teacher thus must begin with writing, most often student writing, and have his students write, evaluate, and revise. He must have them work with the concrete. When he teaches usage, he will not present his materials in a fifty minute lecture. He might begin with a fifteen minute presentation to establish a framework, but his students will spend the majority of class time working with concrete situations, applying the ideas he has presented, and drawing conclusions. Perhaps the teacher will use student writing to initiate a discussion of word choice. In writing an analysis of his relationship with his black roommate, for instance, a white student made a casual reference to his roommate's "lingo." When he presented his paper orally, the word "lingo" bothered many of his classmates. The resulting discussion of word choice touched upon the concepts of audience, tone, levels of usage, denotative versus connotative meaning, and upon the application of these concepts in student writing. Similarly, the teacher might give his students a paragraph in which word choice was inappropriate in terms of purpose and then ask them to rewrite the paragraph, explaining why they made changes. Word choice thus is learned as a tool for analyzing specific problems and solving them as students work inductively toward an understanding of the process of communication. Students actively solve their own writing problems, and by creating such situations, the teacher causes them to learn.

The teacher thus must organize lessons around problems students must solve. Instead of examining a sample of writing from all possible points of view, the teacher should ask his students to direct themselves toward one particular issue. He might ask them to consider word choice in Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," or he might ask them to consider sentence structure in a student essay, depending on what unit he is working on at that time. He should, moreover, make the problem as specific as possible. Instead of asking his students what they think of word choice in Lincoln's address, he should ask them whether or not Lincoln has effectively chosen his words to suit his purpose and audience. General, open-ended rap sessions can be fun, but the new students of the '70s and '80s, not to mention their classmates, require a disciplined, organized approach if they are to learn. To teach them in any other way is to ignore both their lack of self-discipline and their skills deficiencies.

The teacher must also establish goals. Although these goals cannot be measured quantitatively, the following assumptions about good writing can generally be accepted and used objectively for evaluation.

(1) Every piece of expository or persuasive prose has a purpose. Although this purpose can be quite complex, the writer should be able to state it clearly.

(2) An essay should be unified; it should be marked by singleness of purpose.

(3) The flow of word into word, sentence into sentence, paragraph into paragraph, is basic to good writing, for an essay should reflect coherence as well as unity. All ideas must flow together.

(4) The essay must reflect a fullness of development and complexity of analysis appropriate to its purpose and audience. A unified, coherent essay without supporting details or with only a superficial discussion of the issues raised is unsatisfactory.

(5) Finally, the style of the essay must be appropriate for its intended audience and to its purpose.

These goals can be set in advance, although the students will come to an understanding slowly and inductively through solving their own writing problems. Once set, such goals provide student and teacher a common basis for evaluation.

Just as important as setting up goals, however, is establishing a systematic, step-by-step procedure for teaching the process of writing. A teacher who does not break down his course into units, each of which focuses on one aspect of writing, will tend to confuse his students. The first unit thus might focus on purpose. Once students have developed a thorough understanding in this area, the next unit might continue with word choice. The third unit might emphasize sentence structure, and the fourth, paragraph development. The evaluation of student writing should follow the same pattern. In the first unit the teacher should evaluate writing in terms of purpose, in the second unit he should emphasize both purpose and word choice, and so forth. In any event, he should not base his evaluation upon issues that have not been presented or ask his students merely to correct mechanical details and plow ahead into the next theme.

Most teachers, furthermore, found beginning with purpose and then moving to word choice and sentence structure most effective. With this approach, the teacher could ask his students to consider how word choice and sentence structure could help them accomplish a purpose. They could see how poorly chosen words and poorly structured sentences would prevent them from informing or persuading effectively. Beginning with word choice or sentence structure, on the other hand, left students with little sense of the relationship between what they were studying and effective writing. Failure to attack the problems of word choice and sentence structure quickly, moveover, ignored the skills deficiencies characteristic of the new students of the '70s and '80s.

Choosing appropriate subject matter for student writing remains a problem. Eventually students must learn to write about history and political science, but initially essays should draw primarily upon their immediate experience for the following reasons:

(1) Personal experience papers can help break down the separation of student and teacher.

(2) The course is concerned with individual growth and self-discovery; it is a humanities course as well as a service course. In other words, personal experience writing may help students become more aware as human beings and can cause them to modify their attitudes.

(3) Personal experience is readily available to students, and teaching the process of writing is difficult enough without teaching subject matter for student papers.

(4) Finally, personal experience papers are more useful in aiding students develop a sense of their limits as writers. Students can clarify the relationships between purpose, word choice, sentence structure, paragraphs, and other writing matters in a context they understand.

Yet students must eventually move toward writing in which they make a subject their own, in which their experience is primarily intellectual. They must develop the self-discipline to master a topic outside of their immediate experience, for the restraint and control involved in analyzing an initially strange subject are basic to full mastery of writing skills for all students, and especially for the new students of the '70s and '80s, who lack an intellectual background.

In either type of paper, the same emphasis on the process of writing should exist. The student must learn to go from a general subject through the casual jotting down of ideas to the finished product. He must learn to think through his subject, to weigh alternatives, to cast aside writing that is false or flat. The final result hopefully will reflect both vitality and careful analysis. The result, moreover, should be published for the class and, whenever possible, for a larger audience, because the process of writing should lead to communication. The test of the process of writing thus is the effectiveness of the writing, not only from the perspective of the teacher but also from the perspective of the class.

Finally, the teacher should remember a number of methods that are basic to teaching students with skills deficiencies.

(1) He should avoid long lectures or discussions. Most of his students lack the requisite attention span.
(2) When he does lecture, he should make eye contact. Most students tune out if they believe the teacher is talking to his notes or the back wall.
(3) When short ten to fifteen minute presentations are given, the teacher should outline them on the chalkboard. Often the structure of a teacher's lecture is harder to perceive than he himself realizes.
(4) He should emphasize vocabulary. When definitions are introduced, they should be written on the blackboard. Concepts should be repeatedly defined and illustrated until all students have a working knowledge.
(5) In presenting a writing assignment, the teacher should explain precisely what he wants done. He should use positive and negative examples whenever possible.
(6) He should explain the purpose of all writing assignments. Students work better when they understand why they are working.
(7) Most important, he should set goals that both challenge his students and allow them to succeed. He should go slowly so that students do not fall behind, and he should give assignments they can satisfactorily complete. Yet he must have a genuine sense of accomplishment.

The new students of the '70s and '80s must be taught with these considerations in mind, but teachers might well reflect on how these methods can improve teaching to most groups of students.

The best methods may fail, however, if the teacher forgets that motivation is basic, for the desire to write must come before students will learn to write well. Good writing, in other words, requires an appropriate attitude just as much as ability. As a result, an open environment must be established (1) in which students feel neither threatened nor anxious and (2) in which grading is not punitive. The student must be capable of succeeding, and the teacher must praise and encourage honestly, so that insofar as possible, the fear of failure can be eliminated. Perhaps at some point a student with a swollen ego needs to have it lanced, although few students of any variety profit from heavy doses of criticism, but insecure students do not need ego deflation. In particular, the new students of the '70s and '80s thrive upon positive reinforcement.

The teacher, moreover, must know his students, and he must create a situation in which they know one another. Teachers will lecture anyone, but listening to students' ideas and feelings is just as important to teaching the new students of the '70s and '80s as lecturing. Interaction is necessary, and interaction requires a dialogue between student and teacher. Individual conferences with students may be valuable for discussing specific writing problems, but they are just as important in establishing this interaction, particularly if the teacher will listen carefully enough to discover the problem often hidden behind a superficial complaint.

Just as important as student-teacher relationships are student-student relationships, for students respond better if they feel their classmates like them. In fact, students can tolerate a teacher not liking them, but they generally cannot tolerate their peers not liking them. Games used during initial meetings that help students know one another often save valuable time later by establishing a basis for such interaction. Breaking the class into small groups for discussion of specific problems is also valuable. By establishing such relationships, the teacher causes his students to feel that they are important as individuals and are not merely parts of an educational machine.

From this vantage, the teacher is in a better position to assess specific problems both in writing and self-development and to establish a situation that may cause his students to modify their behavior. Because of the emphasis upon motivating and building self-confidence, students develop positive attitudes toward themselves and their abilities. The teaching environment is structured so that the teacher is responding to his students as individuals and looking at their development in very specific ways. Structure is provided by the writing goals, and yet the students are working toward autonomy. In other words, an atmosphere is established in which the teacher can cause his students to learn.

The methods outlined above work for me in educating the new students of the '70s and '80s, and with variations in emphasis, they work for many of my colleagues. Although success in educating these students is far from uniform, I am encouraged by the motivation and progress of my students. They work hard. They do learn. And periodically I meet a former student who seemed hopeless as a freshman but who, largely through his own efforts, has become bright, competent, confident, motivated, and self-disciplined.

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TEACHING WRITING TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, INSTILLING CONFIDENCE

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Much has been written about methods for the teaching of writing to high school students. Workbooks, sequential texts and essays concerning methods and their application offer ideas that are adaptable to the individual situation. Each method has the common objective to establish a measurable improvement in the quality of the student's writing production over a period of time. The numerous methods and varied applications, which often hinge on several other methods and applications, create questions in my mind as to what aspects of a method are useful to my situation, and when should I use the preferred aspects of a method, if to use them at all, in conjunction with other approaches. Every new year brings with it a new set of students which calls for a modification of last year's method and application to the point where you are again "playing-it-by-ear."

What fascinates me is the confidence an author puts into his suggested method. Many times the author of a method literally cries out with a salesman's pitch, "This will work!", or, "Try it, you'll like it!" What fascinates me even more is the confidence some researchers put in the student's capabilities and potentialities in their proposed methods, with the hopeful results that a student can himself write confidently and effectively. Teachers should be aware of this implicit fact in connection with the method, or combination of methods, they propose to use. We must be confident that all students will improve in their writing skills. Confidence must be primarily put in the student's individual potential and the possibility of broadening a student's inherent talents, or no method, whatever it may be, will be effective.

Students presume a confidence in their teacher because the teacher is older, or he may have an impressive degree or possibly several impressive degrees, or he may have an excellent reputation as a teacher, or he may have written published articles, or, and this does exist even though it seems supernatural, he is a combination of all of the above. This same confidence must be reciprocated. Students are young, and they have unique experiences and fresh, novel ideas. Students will work intensively at an appealing and challenging task. They are creative in their many and varied ways of expression. Why should we perpetuate a problem that has stifled good writing from many students for too long a time? Why should we wait until our students get older, until some are given college degrees, until some turn out to be teachers or professional writers, before we put our confidence in them as creative writers? As teachers, we must now have a belief in the capabilities and potentialities of each student to produce quality writing as a student.

James Moffett in A STUDENT-CENTERED LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM GRADES K-13: A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973) suggests a method which is explicitly dependent upon a teacher's confidence in the student. The basis of his method is discussion--talk among a group of five or six students. Moffett believes that verbalization of a student's experiences is the first step to a written product. Discussion helps the student recognize his own experiences and compare them with other students. Discussion also orientates the student toward the audience for which he will be writing. The audience is not a teacher who sits in judgment of a written piece, but a group of peers who share, disagree with, and suggest improvement, regarding a writer's experiences, ideas, and wording structure.

The big problem is making the transition from speaking to writing. Moffett suggests more discussion. The student writes what he has verbalized, whether it is his own ideas or a comment or modification of another student's ideas. At this point, students exchange papers in the group for verbal and written evaluation. The evaluation is not based on a "this-is-wrong-and-this-is-correct" approach, or a "pass/fail" approach. It is based on "you-can-and-will-improve." Grammatical and content evaluation are not totally constricted to standard usage laws which may tend to stifle a student's initiative and creativity. Rather, evaluation is partially based on restructuring the way ideas are expressed without changing the ideas. Students might suggest a "better way of putting it."

The teacher's evaluation of the paper runs parallel to the student's evaluations. The result of several evaluations to one written piece is a more objective evaluation and a possibility of multiple options from which the student may choose. A teacher's confidence in a student's ability to evaluate and suggest alternate ways of expression can only be an asset to another student, as well as to the teacher. It allows for more time to write more pieces, and more evaluation. This approach promotes quantity that will eventually produce quality.

The Moffett method finally hopes to help the student develop a confidence. The student is asked to be confident of his own ability to write and evaluate and to accept confidently the immediate feedback of others. Feedback, which is evaluation and suggestion, is not punitive, but is rather an opportunity to improve. It does not damage initiative and creativity! Rather, it instills confidence in the writer that he can and will write more effectively.

Kenneth Koch in WISHES, LIES AND DREAMS (NY: Vintage, 1971) begins with the same premise as James Moffett. Koch suggests that before you engage in a method of teaching the writing of poetry, you must make the students believe you believe they are poets. He then proceeds to put a confidence in their ability to create a free flow of ideas which are not stifled by an adherence to classical styles, laws of poetry (e. g. rhyme, meter) or laws of grammar. The poems are then read aloud for suggestions and evaluation from the students as well as the teacher.

Both Moffett and Koch rely on the past experiences of the students, the ability of the student to recall those experiences, to verbalize those experiences (group discussion), and finally to write in a coherent, comprehensible fashion which also depends on constant group feedback. Their methods offer nothing without a teacher's initial confidence in the future improvement of a student as a writer. No method for teaching writing to high school students will work if it does not primarily contain a teacher's confidence in the student as a prerequisite. For too long now confidence has been put into what the teacher thinks or knows, or believes to be the only way of writing. Consequently, we find students writing for the teacher and being forced into a style of writing which is not uniquely their own. In such a case, the method will work, as all methods do, but the results will be minimal, as we are all well aware. The positive results will be gauged on the student's ability to imitate the method and what the method suggests. Creativity will obviously be minimal.

Our task as teachers is to adopt a method such as Moffett's or Koch's, or develop a method which includes a prerequisite where the teacher must initially exhibit and persist in demonstrating a confidence in the abilities and future improvement of a student as a writer. For once, we, as teachers, must believe in the person, not the mechanics; that is, in the student, not the method. When we refer to the coined statements, "You can't write," or, "If you keep doing this, you'll never improve," we are putting the method before the student. This only damages the student's ego, his desire to improve, and most of all, it shows him that you don't have confidence in him as a writer.

As Moffett and Koch suggest, the method should be "student-centered." The student should be the nucleus of any method, since it is the student who eventually verbalizes, writes and revises his own ideas. This approach can only promote individual creativity, and no longer make a student a "slave" to a method. Our work, as teachers, becomes one of being an advisor, and not a judge. Our comments will be taken seriously by the student because our verbal and written evaluation will be based on our suggestions to the student for improvement, and not our assessment of a pass/fail paper. As you can see, the teacher's role in a "student-centered" method is not made secondary. It is a more active role which allows for individual attention to students who have a need for more improvement than others.

The age-old problems of teaching writing to students can at least be partially alleviated if the teacher chooses a "student-centered" method. The prerequisite of a teacher's confidence in the student as a writer must be a teacher's guide in the application of a chosen method and a never forgotten premise in the implementation of that method.

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING: AN AID FROM FILM AND STORY

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Use them together--a film and a story--to help students understand what is involved in descriptive writing. Let students see--two ways: first, with their minds, using the story as base material; and then with their eyes, as the film team provides selective visualization. Help students to discover the touchstones of descriptive writing, fairly simple devices that dispel the notion that writers must dip their pens in enchanted ink.

To clarify these modest objectives, Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and the film adaptation (Contemporary Films, 27 minutes, b&w, rental $20.00), and Academy Award winner, have been selected. Unusual artistic efforts, both deserve study in their own rights; together, they may crank into focus a learning experience not soon forgotten.

As unforgettable as the story's ending, when the body of Peyton Farquhar, "with broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge," is the split-second eternity, a miniscule flight between the ends of a rope, when Farquhar's mind describes an escape, complete with physical sensations and revelatory discoveries. Within these precincts, Bierce provides the descriptive techniques that serve the purposes of this discussion.

First is the vantage point, involving distance, angle and the recording mind, from which an object is described. Change any of these factors and the description changes. Bierce changes two of the factors, distance and angle, to accomodate the objects he wishes to describe. Hence, from the eye of Peyton Farquhar, who is in the river, occur the following variations:

> His hands tore the noose "away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake."
>
> From the water's edge he looked up: "The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants. . . ."
>
> Over his shoulder, the hunted man saw that "the soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine. . . ."

Fairly faithful to these and other descriptive passages, the film, instead of restricting or replacing student visualization, places each detail in a limited setting so that the student may enlarge on his own vision. Perhaps more important here, the film produces the vicarious effect, enabling students to observe how angle and distance influence the way one sees an object.

How a reader will see an object described is a touchy affair with a writer, for he ordinarily wishes to create a particular impression. In order to accomplish this end, he must be selective; that is, he must choose detail that contributes to the desired impression. Should Bierce, for example, wish to dwell on the femininity of Farquhar's wife, it seems unlikely he would describe the porosity of her skin.

Observe Bierce's selection of detail intended to further an impression of preternatural sensitivity:

> Farquhar "felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of

> each leaf--saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragonflies' wings, the strokes of the waterspiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat--all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water."

Notice, as Farquhar lifts his gaze from the water's surface to the arching trees and then lowers it to the grassy bank and again to the water, that Bierce records, from a possible choice of thousands, a few specific details and arranges them, with slight variation, according to the senses of touch, sight, and sound. This quoted passage thus illustrates a principle of writing description: determine the desired impression, select specific detail that contributes to the impression, and then order the detail according to a structured plan.

Although the film does not duplicate every detail in the story, it does visibly demonstrate patterns of description as discussed above. In some instances, because of the camera's unusual ability to capture luminosity and exert magnification, nature images may be more memorable than Bierce's own words. But that is of no moment here. What appears important is that the film reinforces the idea of pattern in description.

Details a writer selects should leap to life. In other words, they should so invigorate a passage that the description in some way, perhaps indirectly, moves closer to the reader's own experience. One way of securing this result is through sensory comparison, the fund of which remains man's common property, and the presence of which commonly reveals itself through figurative devices. This idea enjoys clarity when one sees how Bierce enlivens his detail through comparison.

> The sentinels...might have been statues.
>
> [The sounds] hurt his ears like the thrust of a knife.
>
> These pains...seemed like streams of pulsating fire.
>
> He heard the dulled thunder of the volley.
>
> He thought with the rapidity of lightning.
>
> He felt himself whirled round and round--spinning like a top.
>
> A blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon.

Although sound effects help, these comparisons do not, of course, appear in the film for the film has no narration, no speaking parts that carry the story. The film may, however, offer students practice in making comparisons. After showing, for example, the scene where Farquhar fled along the wide, tree-lined road, a teacher may ask students to create comparisons that appeal to the senses. With the scene hopefully "recollected in tranquillity," students will write comparisons for such cues as follow:

> The untraveled avenue beneath his bare, battered feet felt _________.
>
> The great borders of trees led to the horizon where they terminated, like ____.

> His parched mouth, closing over his thirst-swollen tongue, tasted______.
>
> Whispering noises in the woods on both sides of the road resembled_____.

Also, after viewing the scene in which Farquhar first sees his wife and strives to reach her, students may write descriptions, freely including sense perceptions to sharpen selected details. This scene appears particularly useful, for the film makes more of it than did Bierce, and students must rely more on their inventiveness for figures of comparison.

Another recognition students may obtain is that description does not necessarily occur in block form. Frequently it finds use intermingled with other forms of discourse, perhaps most often with narration. This technique enables a writer to avoid long passages of description and to provide an aid to visualization at places it is needed. Bierce, for instance, shows what is happening. Events occur according to order, but at precisely the most valuable times, descriptive touches add a spark that enlivens.

> The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and threw it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake.

Combined descriptive and narrative effects occur smoothly in the film as the motion picture camera adapts especially well to this technique. Scarcely more than a suggestion should be necessary for students to make their own observations, but the observation is important, for it helps students to strengthen the learning experience.

Consciously or not, the person writing description uses the steps traced in this discussion. To summarize, these are the steps:

1. Establish a vantage point

2. Determine the distance

3. Determine the desired impression

4. Select details

5. Plan the order of details

6. Make sensory comparisons

Reaching understanding of the way elements of description harmonize requires work, but with patience, with practice, with pain, what seems toilsome today becomes automatic tomorrow. To ease the process, double media--one visual, one mentally visual--both telling similar stories, both describing similar worlds, may be analogized with differences seen between the left and right eyes. Together, a new perspective arrives.

ON SENSORY AWARENESS, COMPOSITIONS, AND FLICKS

Lynn Kerr, formerly Kaibab School, Scottsdale, now at ASU

I ran myself ragged two years ago trying to turn kids on to sensory perception. I ended up with only a passing grade as a frustrated dramatist--and that only for effort.

I was one of those honest first year teachers who felt bound to read nightly and thoroughly all 150 compositions my eighth graders submitted. My honesty was really put to the test when I had to wade through theme after theme of vague, unfeeling hogwash. I realized soon enough that my honesty was a schizophrenic condition. I nobly read each and every theme and just as unnobly assigned complementary evaluations to each. (Somewhere I had read not to mar the students' papers with scathingly sarcastic remarks.)

So, with banner flying, I set out to revamp my character which could only be accomplished by revamping my troops' compositions. Day after day I arrived on that great battlefield armed with various and sundry ingenious gimmicks guaranteed to sharpen sensory awareness, I thought.

It was great. While working on visual perception, I became a track star rounding up the students around the school who were supposed to be communicating with nature, and digging what they saw. Several dug what they saw all right, but unfortunately or fortunately, it wasn't especially in nature, or at least Thoreau never mentioned it.

We all came out pretty well on the taste and smell lessons--I improved my culinary skills and they were able to skimp on the cafeteria luncheon.

When I performed my "touch" routine, costume complete with blindfold and fishing pole, my students guffawed and hastily assigned me my C.

I'll never entirely forsake my dramatic technique, but one thing's for sure--the next time I tackle a project like that I will enlist the aid of some ready-made materials.

Recently, I've been exposed to some really motivating short flicks. My only regret is that I hadn't seen them earlier. I'm sure I could have used them profitably with my descriptive writing unit.

Just for fun I'm going to take my creative writing unit, several films I've just seen and some basic principles of Psycho-Cybernetics and see if I can recreate that ego-shattering experience and turn it into a positive one in light of what I now know.

I'm back in February now, dozing off over a stack of compositions, cursing myself for not having pursued a more exciting career like dishwashing. I'm getting right down to the wire now as far as alternatives are concerned. Either I compromise my honor or I teach these kids to write--and not to a doorknob but to me and to others as the feeling human beings that we are supposed to be.

I remember seeing a short film recently entitled "Describing What We See" (12 minutes, color, S-L Films, Rental $10.00). I also remember rearranging myself in a position most comfortable for napping when the title was announced. But it wasn't at all what I expected, though as a matter of fact, it really came off well. Briefly this film is a hodge-podge of swiftly moving images. Shots of flowers, children, ducks, fountains, steak barbecue--you name it--flash by. Close-up shots focus on details--a fountain in the breeze, gas station fringe trim blowing, different flowers, a hand feeling sand, a potter's wheel in motion. A narrator points out various writing skills necessary to make these images come alive on paper. Sights and sounds of a baseball game flash, a carnival--children screaming, music--a sailboat, men sailing, sunsets. The narrator asks that the students describe one of the scenes they have seen using words most descriptive of the sensations they saw or felt. If I really had it to do over, I would definitely use this film as an introduction to my descriptive writing unit. After we discussed the senses stirred by the film, I would challenge the students to recapture on paper one scene of their choosing. They would be expected to refer to a Thesaurus for shades of connotations that might enhance the sensory value of their descriptions.

"Starlight" (5 minutes, color, Pyramid Films, Rental $10.00) is another film I'd manage to work into my unit. This is sort of a "far-out" flick and the kids would like it even if they didn't catch the message the first time around. Its back-to-nature theme unthreads itself in various fast cuts and crazy camera angles. It starts out with scenes of the city and the usual traffic-pedestrian hassle with a soundtrack of religious chant. The camera focus switches from an old monk walking in a forest to a rural setting accompanied by sitar sounds. The lens focus on clouds, flashback to the rural setting, a potter's wheel and finally zoom in on the potter's hands.

For the most part, kids aren't accustomed to seeing films of this sort in an English classroom. These films are so "now" they're bound to spark interest.

I would advise the students that they will be expected to compose photographic essays as a final project. This assignment however, will obviously require a sophisticated awareness of sensory images. Each student would be expected to have a theme which would be developed only through photographs sequentially and poignantly arranged.

In preparation for this project, we would pay special attention to several more films and try to discover exactly how the photographer captivates his audience and relays his message--in most cases without ever having to say a word.

"Nahanni" (18 minutes, color, Contemporary Films, Rental $15.00) does have a narrator, but the narrator doesn't even begin to describe the feelings that the viewer senses. Seventy-three year old Albert Faille searched the beautiful yet terrifying Nahanni River for gold year after year with neither success nor discouragement. The photography in this film is breathtaking. Every human sense is tapped with every changing scene. As Albert trudges up steep terrain hauling cumbersome sheets of lumber on his back, there is no audience who does not stoop under that weighty load with him.

The students would be asked to note close-up shots like Albert Faille's face--the straining wrinkles, the determined eyes, the grunting and gasping sounds they don't actually hear but know exist, the taste of sweat trickling into the corners of his mouth, the feel of the unbending lumber on his back, the strain of having to walk in so hunched a position for so long.

I would ask the students to pick out particular scenes that struck them most and see if they could recreate them as forcefully on paper as they were on screen. They would be expected to include detailed description of every sense awakened by the scene.

Another film I would use with happy results would be the brief film entitled "Glass" (11 minutes, color, Contemporary, Rental $20.00). The theme of artistry vs. mechanization is apparent though sensitively expressed. The first scenes focus on men working in a glass-blowing factory. Their intense pride in their work is captured by close-up camera shots on the men's expressions, their knarled hands, their misshapen cheeks, all appropriately accompanied by a Jazz score background. The camera switches midstream to a factory where machines do all the work and the soundtrack switches to clicking, clanking, mechanical noises. The machines go on the blink and begin breaking bottles one after the other.

The contrast in sounds, sights, textures, smells, etc. are so sharp that nothing need be said in explanation of the theme. Conveniently, there should be no difficulty in discussing the importance of sensory development in that film.

As another film must, I would thread in the short flick called "The Cow" (11 minutes, color, Churchill Films). A full eleven minutes is dedicated to looking at cows--not just looking at them but almost studying them as if for the first time. It's amazing what the students would notice about cows that they had never noticed before. This film would serve a dual purpose in my classroom. Not only would it be another plug for sensory awareness, but also it should hint to students that they needn't search out virgin soil to write an interesting paper. If a film can be successful that does nothing but look at cows for eleven minutes, surely the key lies in how it looks at cows.

The students would be assigned to find the dullest objects possible and make them come alive by showing us through written sensory images how to look at it differently and interestingly.

The time would arrive soon enough to begin the photographic essay project. Each student would be responsible for selecting a theme of his own and deciding how best to present it visually. By this time, they should be rather sensorily oriented (or obsessed) and capable of choosing images that are arousing.

If I had it to do over...

TRUST, WRITE, READ . . . An Approach to Launching a Class in Creative Writing

Larry Vosovic and Tom Baer, Homestead High, Sunnyvale, California

"I can't write." "I have nothing to write about." "It never comes out right on paper." "I know what I mean but I can't write it down." Thus, the creative force is stifled inside each student who is terrified by that first huge blank sheet of paper. Terrified by his own expectations of a paper bloodied with corrections. Terrified by the fear that his stories aren't of interest.

We set out to break these barriers and release the authors in the creative writing classes this year. Through a unique humanistic approach, we hoped the students would learn to trust themselves, their peers, and their teachers. They would learn to write by getting honest positive feedback from their audience and they would read their material with pride. They would, trust, write and read.

After reading as a group segments of Macrorie's UPTAUGHT and Yevtushenko's "People" we emphasized to the students that, "Every one has a story to tell." The student had only to sink back into his own memory for stories of joy, heartache, embarrassment, or the simple human experience of living. The student-writer had simply to recall the "feelings" of that moment, and to recreate the scene physically in order to develop a legitimate story with real people operating with real emotions.

Building trust takes time. So instead of jumping in the first day with a writing assignment that the class was not ready for we spent the first few days in activities not usually associated with an English class. First, to build trust, we took several boxes of crayons for the class and a manila folder for each student. On the front cover the students drew a picture or pictures of their "attitude" or "life-style." With the class seated in a circle, we then took turns sharing the meaning behind the series of doodles, stick figures, or drawings that symbolized who we were and our attitudes toward the world. Symbols abounded. The students quickly discovered that although there was a uniqueness about each picture there were definitely some basic themes that ran through everyone's drawings. They felt restricted by parents and school and society in general and yet confused by the infinite number of opportunities available to them.

Students were encouraged to respond to each other, affirming the speaker. All questions were encouraged but the speaker could reserve the right to say, "I don't care to go into that."

The next day we opened our folders and across the inside we drew our life history, comic strip fashion. (The teacher is encouraged to participate in all exercises and is reminded that the class will be as open as the example students are given.) Students were encouraged to draw all of their thoughts and feelings as a matter of organizing some of the major turning points in their life. Each student, however, shared only those parts of his picture story that he felt comfortable with. Students were reminded, not required, to keep in mind that their life history is more than a series of "physical" moves and that they should keep in mind "mental," "emotional," and "spiritual" turning points as well. Questions and affirmations followed each student's presentation.

The third day, the students were asked to respond in one or two pages to, "Describe yourself writing this assignment." The only other instruction was the suggestion to include "physical," "mental," "emotional," and "sensory" detail. This was the carry over from the previous day's drawings. No example of "detail" was given. The students read their interpretation of the assignment and those who had gotten in touch with specific details that awakened a universal thought of feeling or action were told by the teacher and the other students, "Yes. Indeed I have felt that or that. I just never could put it in words." "I've felt that way but never thought about it until now." Thus, a writing lesson was given for all, while affirming the students' own example of good writing. Discussions and digressions were encouraged. Students learned that when they reached into their memory and came in contact with the subconscious or the unconscious they were tracing universal threads that run through all of us. Remember, "the dash across the hallway into Daddy's bed before the boogieman could get you," or "the butterflies in the pit of your stomach hoping the prom date would be cancelled," or "the reflections on that new girl in class?" Each thought called up another in someone else and the discussion spread and deepened as the students and teacher shared thoughts and feelings they weren't consciously aware of a moment before. Defenses dropped quickly. Energy consumed in hiding secret fears was turned into digging into the treasure chest of experiences for material for stories. The material was real. The author understood his story and his characters. He had lived it. It was not long before the students realized that we were really all alike with our common fears and projections.

Emphasizing the idea that we were all alike and encouraging openness, the next day we asked the students to, "Reach back into your memory as far as you can and record the first thing you can remember. Create a story around the event. Include all that we have gone over so far: the physical, mental, emotional, and sensory detail. This time concentrate on describing what you are talking about, don't tell us what to think. Show, don't tell. Don't say, "The girl was beautiful." Show us what she looked like through detail. Describe why you thought she was beautiful. Let us make our own judgment." Again the student was writing what he knew well. He could easily create humor or pathos by digging back inside, then recreating the thoughts and feelings of the situation.

Reading the stories in class made each particular work much more important. The whole class was going to hear and react to the story--not just the anonymous teacher with his red pencil. Teacher's and students' remarks were kept positive and reinforcing for the first half of the semester. Criticisms, when they were made, were personalized. The student-critic might say, "Since I'm not interested in auto-racing at all, I was bored by the long description of the pre-race preparation. If you're trying to capture a wide audience you might cut out some of that." This allowed the writer to consider the source of the criticism and to react accordingly. He might lose some of the authenticity that aficionados demand if he cut part of his description. It was his choice though, that was the important thing. Suggestions were made to the particular student reading at that moment but the whole class benefited, saving needless repetition on each paper. As teachers our workload was cut so we were able to spend more time with those students reluctant to read their more personal stories and poems and on particular problems students were having in their writing.

Continuing the universality of experience theme, we switched to the writing of poetry. We used Paul Horn's record, "Inside," a lone flute played inside the echoing Taj Mahal. The lights were turned off and the assignment simply, 'Write the best poem you can. Title it, "Inside." Get in touch with all your senses. Try to include some sensory detail in your poem." Syesthesia was demonstrated in several of the resulting poems and was applauded as such, instead of criticized as a mixed metaphor. In the record the flute is occasionally interrupted by a palace guard giving out a humming call that sounds much like "OM." The "OM" of the Hindu religion was discussed briefly after the students had written their poems.

The poems were read and discussed. Again we tried to tell the poet/writer what effect his work had on us. "What images were especially strong?" "What images did you feel some emotion about?" "What part of the poem moved you to thought or a digression that kept you from hearing the rest of the poem?" "Tell the writer." "Listen closely." "Read the poem again."

The teacher didn't have to point out the universality of the themes of the "Inside" poems. It became apparent to students that both the music and the title had lead them into touching that natural chord that is in all of us and that our uniqueness stems only from the way we choose to strum that chord. The next day we dicusssed "Om" and it's significance. We read the chapter of Hesse's SIDDHARTHA entitled, "Om" and played The Moody Blues' album "In Search of the Lost Chord." The last cut of the album is entitled "Om." The assignment, "Write a poem entitled 'OM'. Recall the assignment suggestions from yesterday and the suggestions made by the class." It is not important for the student to understand the definition of "Om", but to simply write his poem entitled "Om."

As the semester moved on we found that one of the empirical effects of this "Trust, Write, Read" method was that the students learned how to listen attentively to subtle details and to speak honestly about how they felt about a particular work. They were able to make the distinction between their "opinion" of a work and their judgment of the "quality" of that work. It was a great year. The method worked.

HANDWRITING

Charles Davis, University of Arizona

One of the horrors that all of us who teach composition face is the illegible paper. If a student's paper is rife with errors in punctuation and spelling, we may groan, but at least we know how to point out the errors. If a paper lacks order, we can usually make some suggestions about arrangement. If a paper is inexcuseably banal, we propably have ways of helping the student deal more maturely with his subject. If we cannot read a paper, we have difficulty coming up with any responses, other than advising the student to rewrite the paper altogether. We hope such advice will work, but we know from experiences that the rewritten paper will probably be a horror too, and we wonder what we can say when it comes in. Those of us who teach students in their years beyond elementary school know practically nothing about how handwriting is taught, how we got our present system, or how we can improve the handwriting of our students.

Elementary-school teachers are usually prepared to teach handwriting; secondary-school teachers rarely learn anything about handwriting or how to teach it. Elementary-school children receive regular instruction in writing; secondary-school students may receive compliments or complaints about their writing, but they almost never receive instruction. Yet a student's use of handwriting progressively increases as he goes through his schooling. In third grade a student may not write more than 100 words a day; by eleventh grade the student may have written one hundred words of notes at the beginning of a period, and he may continue to take notes and write questions and answers throughout the day. Sometimes he will write for himself, and sometimes he will write for his teachers; if his handwriting is poor, neither he nor his teacher may ever be able to decipher what he has written.

The cursive handwriting commonly taught today is a derivative of copperplate hand, developed to meet the needs of printers early in the history of engraving. Engravers used a stylus to etch the writing on a plate, and the shapes and slant of copperplate cursive derive from the relationship of the stylus to the engraving plate. Pens or pencils do not work on paper the way a stylus works on an engraver's plate. The exquisite detail possible through engraving can be duplicated with a pen or carefully sharpened pencil, but the skills required are considerable, perfect control and balance of the arm, wrist, and fingers. Early copybooks presented highly elaborate models and exercises, and students were set to endless hours of reproducing the kind of filigree that resulted in the elegant hand of centuries past. The ideal hand was elaborate and graceful, but the ideal was not often realized. Anyone who has read 19th-century letters know that the everyday handwriting for business correspondence or friendly letters was rarely anywhere near the legibilty or elaboration of the models which were presented in the classroom, for copperplate hands break down under speed, as do all scripts that do not take into account natural relationships between paper, pen or pencil, fingers, wrist, and arm.

Many experienced teachers will argue that boys have poorer handwriting than girls. My experience leads me to agree, and I think there is good reason for this. Girls go through the physiological changes of puberty earlier than boys. Most girls have regained physiological equilibrium before they are subject to the increasing demands of writing in secondary school, and many boys have not. I can clearly remember my frustration when I had arranged everything to get my students to write for a period, only to have chaos ensue when a tenth-grade boy tripped, caught in the imbalance brought on by his changing from child to adolescent. Many boys are caught in a situation where they must write more and write faster at a time when they lack the necessary coordination. Unfortunately, by the time they have regained the necessary control, their handwriting may be permanently miserable.

What are teachers to do? If history and physiology are against us, is there anything we can do? I think there is much a teacher can do to get a legible paper. First, a teacher can show interest in a student's handwriting. In the same way that students may shape their arguments to their teacher's preferences, students may write more clearly if their teachers ask them to. Second, a teacher can suggest more effective use of accessories to handwriting. Students who write illegibly in soft, dull number-one pencil may write clearly with hard, sharp number-four pencil. Students who smear papers with cheap ball-point pens may not smear them with equally cheap felt-tip pens. Some students need to write larger letters and need appropriately lined paper to guide them. All these attempts at analysis of what is wrong with handwriting and what might improve it are additional ways of showing a student that one cares about his writing. Third, a teacher can find out how his students learned to write. Elementary teachers check with one another to see what kind of instruction a student has had; secondary-school instructors would do well to check with the elementary teachers too. Fourth, a teacher can work for reform in the teaching of handwriting in American schools. Our British colleagues are having success in teaching Italic handwriting. While most English teachers recall that Elizabeth I often signed her name in the humanistic script popularized in Italy, and all of us recognize Italic type, few Americans know Italic cursive. Yet Italic cursive has great advantages. Italic allows for considerable individuality, especially in the formation of capitals and joins within words. Written carefully Italic is as handsome as any derivative of copperplate and not at all as exasperatingly tedious to learn. Italic does not lose legibility under the pressure of speed. All and all, we are not helpless; there are several things we can do with little effort on our part.

Certainly we are not in an era where many advocate an artistic hand. Somehow skillful handwriting has gone the way of such crafts as needlework and carpentry. What we want is a serviceable hand, one efficient for taking notes and writing an occasional paper or examination. We write for practical reasons, not for art. Personal correspondence we probably typewrite, but we are even more likely to telephone or to tape and mail a cassette. To us, a phone call or tape recording seems more personal than a handwritten letter, a judgment which might be received with curiosity in an earlier era when the quality of one's handwriting was thought to be a sure sign of one's education, one's breeding, one's character. Yet even those of us who argue most strongly for a practical, efficient hand must admit that an admirable hand delights both the reader and the writer. Like needlework and carpentry, a skillful hand has little to do with contemporary life's practical tasks, but any craft well done remains individually satisfying. Young people today show strong preferences for crafts such as weaving, metalwork, and ceramics, preferring the individually wrought to the mass-produced. Most of us who teach English are sympathetic to goals of self-expression. We all know the care adolescents may take with individualizing their signatures; we can try to get them to take the same care with all their handwriting.

SOME BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING ABOUT HANDWRITING

Alfred Fairbank, THE STORY OF HANDWRITING, ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT. NY: Watson-Guptill, 1970. A standard survey, well illustrated, by a foremost British paleographer.

Alfred Fairbank, A HANDWRITING MANUAL. London: Faber and Faber, 1954. A standard text for teaching or learning modern Italic script

Tom Gourdie, A GUIDE TO BETTER HANDWRITING. London: Studio Vista, 1967. A survey for teachers; interesting discussions of present systems used in British, Continental, and American schools.

A.S. Osley, ed., CALLIGRAPHY AND PALEOGRAPHY. NY: October House, 1966. A festschrift for Alfred Fairbank; includes several articles on writing in schools.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND STYLISTIC OPTIONS

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My title for this article contains the word "option," which means "the power or right of choosing," derived from the Latin optare, "to select. Obviously, this semantic choice indicates that I have elected to engage in a controversy, for it suggests that in his use of language man is not the passive product of genetic and environmental forces, that he does have creative will, that the manifestations of this will are not always predictable.

B.F. Skinner would not agree. The July 15, 1972 issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW published an excerpt from Skinner's CUMULATIVE RECORD: A SELECTION OF PAPERS, entitled "On 'Having' a Poem." About half the essay reviews Skinner's old quarrel with Chomsky--Chomsky wrote an unfavorable review of Skinner's VERBAL BEHAVIOR in 1957--before a statement of the thesis is made: a poet "has" a poem in much the same way a woman "has" a baby. A poem, Skinner believes, is a passive achievement, the product of the poet's genetic and environmental histories. Somewhat near the end, Skinner modifies the analogy, admitting that unlike a mother, "the poet has access to his poem during gestation. He may tinker with it. Bits and pieces occur to the poet, who rejects or allows them to stand, and who puts them together to compose a poem . But they come from his past history, verbal and otherwise, and he has to learn how to put them together" ("On 'Having'a Poem," SATURDAY REVIEW, July 15, 1972).

In this now famous review of Skinner's book Chomsky rather mildly asserts that there is no evidence to support any specific claim about the "relative importance of 'feedback' from the environment and the 'independent contribution of the organism' in the process of language acquisition" (Noam Chomsky, "A Review of B.F. Skinner's VERBAL BEHAVIOR, 1959," in CHOMSKY: SELECTED READINGS, ed. J.P.B. Allen and Paul van Buren, London: Oxford U Press, 1971, p.137). Both Skinner and Chomsky use the word "learn," though to Skinner learning is differential reinforcement and to Chomsky it is a matter of developing the innate capacity to generalize, hypothesize and 'process information' in language acquisition (Chomsky, P. 139).

If as teachers of composition we lean toward Skinner, I suppose we emphasize models. For example, Franklin in his AUTOBIOGRAPHY describes how he taught himself to write by laboriously emulating the style of Addison, But if what we are really trying to do is to release linguistic creativity, then we must go beyond models and reinforcement. Modern transformational grammars can, if wisely used, be effective teaching instruments, for they offer hypotheses and generalizations about English sentences which can be utilized over and over again in an infinite number of linguistic contexts. No doubt writers with a touch of genius will develop their innate capacities to generalize about language without a teacher or a grammar, but it is helpful for ordinary people to be shown the way.

Two factors, it seems to me, determine whether a student can learn to write at all. First of all, he must be able to distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical statements, and second, he must be aware of the semantic and logical relationships that restrict his range of choice. Helping a student achieve such competence is itself a very large order, and many of us would settle for Plato's non-rhetoric, which stresses simply truth and logic and clarity. But there is also the Aristotelian goal of writing effectively, and to do that the writer must know how to choose between synonymous expressions. He must know his options so that he can choose the expression most likely to meet his rhetorical objectives.

We have ample evidence that professional writers do make conscious choices between similar statements. As an example we can look at three versions of Bryant's "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood." In 1817 he wrote:

                Misery is wed
To guilt. Hence in these shades we still behold
The abodes of gladness, here from tree to tree
And through the rustling branches flit the birds
In wantonness of spirit;--theirs are strains
Of no dissembled rapture--

In 1821 he changed this passage to:

                Misery is wed
To guilt. And hence the shades are still the abodes
Of undissembled gladness; the thick roof
Of green and stirring branches is alive
And musical with birds, that sing and sport
In wantonness of spirit. . . .

By 1832 Bryant had come to the reading now anthologized:

                God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these shades
Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick roof
Of green and stirring branches is alive
And musical with birds, that sing and sport
In wantonness of spirit. . . .
(Cited in Walter Blair, et al. (eds.), THE LITERATURE OF THE UNITED STATES, I
Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1969, p. 173)

There are, of course, several changes, but notice how Bryant stayed through two versions with the metaphor, "Misery is wed to guilt," stated in the passive voice. Then in his final version he chose the active statement, "God hath yoked to guilt/ Her pale tormentor, misery." Notice, too, that he changed "the abodes of gladness" from the complement of "behold," which focuses attention upon an indefinite "we" as subject, to the direct statement, ". . .these shades/ Are still the abodes of gladness."

WRITERS AT WORK includes photographs of manuscript pages from rather famous literary works. There is evidence that linguistic choices were made right down to the final galley proofs. A proof of Saul Bellow's HERZOG had this sentence: "Stiff and hesitant, she turned her body aside in her abrupt way, then her decision reached, turned just as abruptly to him again." Reading the galleys, Bellow apparently decided against the absolute, "her decision reached," revising the sentence to read: "Then she came to a decision and turned to him with the same abruptness." (WRITERS AT WORK, 3rd Series, ed. George Plimpton, NY: Viking Press, 1967, p. 176.) Notice, too, that he substituted a phrase of manner, "with the same abruptness," for the adverb, "abruptly." Both these decisions--to substitute the sentence for the absolute, the phrase for the adverb--are merely syntactic choice, involving no semantic changes. Examples of artistic revisions can be multiplied, but I think that most writers do more than "tinker" with their manuscripts. I do not argue that Bryant or Bellow knew about transformational grammar; I merely suggest that they had a rather sophisticated knowledge about language.

The property of language which allows for such options, or choices, is synonymy, the basic identity of meaning between two or more utterances, which, according to Jacobs and Rosenbaum in TRANSFORMATIONS, STYLE, AND MEANING, is to be found in every language. (Roderick A. Jacobs and Peter S. Rosenbaum, TRANSFORMATIONS, STYLE, AND MEANING, Waltham, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1971, p. 1.) Basic meaning, as they define it, is roughly what two or more paraphrases of a sentence have in common, while surface meaning adds that extra dimension of style resulting from personal choice. Most teachers of composition have, I believe, long realized this property of language, even at the level of teaching basic sentence patterns. English has such alternative patterns as:

He farms.	He is a farmer.
He organizes.	He is an organizer.
The paint will become hard.	The paint will harden.
Jim is an athlete.	Jim is athletic.
He criticized his parents.	He was critical of his parents.

In these sentences the lexical items are identical; all that is involved is morphophonemic transformation. The fact that any native speaker of English will recognize the sentences in each pair as synonymous suggests that they have the same basic meaning in the deep structure of language. Each represents, however, a different surface structure which gives form to the meaning. It is at this level that stylistic options are made, often intuitively, though they can be described systematically in terms of transformations. English has some transformation rules that are rhetorically very useful.

Two types of sentence patterns widely discussed in rhetorics are the passive and the there. One popular college rhetoric has on its check list the item, "No passive, no There is." A qualifying statement at the bottom of the list reads, "When setting any of these points aside, be sure you have a good rhetorical reason for doing so." (Sheridan Baker, THE COMPLETE STYLIST, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1966, end pages). It is obvious that the author accepts the principle of linguistic choice. Most native writers of English are aware that a sentence with a transitive verb can be expressed in two different ways, but when they become mired in a bad passive they cannot always find their way back to shore. Sometimes it is not clear to younger writers that the passive transformation allows for the deletion of the phrase of agency, for example, and thus they do not know what the original subject in active voice was. In this passive sentence, "Both gold and silver were coined," only the context would reveal the agent. To re-route the sentence, the writer must supply the lost subject before he can perform the general shift back to active voice. If the emphasis requires that the agent be expressed, the return to active voice may be important: "The government coined both gold and silver." Sometimes the passive is merely clumsy: "This was immediately realized by me." In either situation, the transformation rules clearly specify the relationship between the two voices and show the writer how to move freely back and forth. In GRAMMAR AS STYLE, Virginia Tufte has an excellent chapter on stylistic uses of the passive. Here are two of her examples:

> They sailed and trailed and flew and raced and
> drawled and walked and were carried, finally, home.
> --John Knowles, INDIAN SUMMER, p. 4.
>
> It is men tormenting and killing a bull; it is a
> bull being tormented and killed.
> --Max Eastman, ART AND THE LIFE OF ACTION, p. 90.
>
> (Virginia Tufte, GRAMMAR AS STYLE, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971, p. 205.)

Notice that in both sentences it is the contrast between the active and passive verbs that is important to the rhetorical emphasis.

Except for widely used colloquial patterns, such as "There were six people in the room," the there transformation involves a rather literary type of inversion which breaks with the normally anticipated subject-predicate order. I doubt that the writer of this biographical sketch of Poe could have avoided the there transformation in "There are, to be sure, elements of strangeness in the life of this neurotic genius," (Blair et al, ed., p. 231) since be lacks a complement. But in this sentence an element of stylistic choice seems apparent: "There followed a period of service in the army (1827-1829), an unhappy brief career at West Point (1830-1831), and a final break with Allan (1832)" (Blair, p. 231). The writer cannot pull the intransitive verb "followed" to the front of the sentence without filling the subject slot with there. The real subject--the rather long series--then concludes the sentence. This arrangement gives the writer a strategic advantage: he avoids the anti-climatic word order which would result if the long subject were followed by the one-word verb. Psycholinguists have told us that our memories tolerate right-branching sentences--that is, sentences weighted nearer the period--more easily than those that keep the finite verb a mystery. This factor seems to be one of the advantages in knowing how to apply the there transformation.

Two other transformations make it possible for the writer to focus attention at the end of the sentence: the extraposition transformation involving it and the cleft transformation. The extraposition transformation lets the writer choose between "That you are so careless concerns me" and "It concerns me that you are so careless." Again, I think, the grammar permits the writer to place the weighty subject at the end, where it is more tolerable. The cleft transformation lets the writer choose between "The enthusiasm of the young actors pleased the audience" and "What pleased the audience was the enthusiasm of the young actors." Although the sentences appear synonymous, as they probably are in the deep structure, the cleft transformation focuses attention upon the noun phrase at the end.

These four transformations--the passive, there, extraposition, and cleft--enable a writer to take different syntactic routes through a sentence as it surfaces into rhetoric. The rhetorical imperatives of the message, its occasion, and the voice of the writer will determine syntactic decisions even as they decide larger matters of genre and tone. Out of context it is difficult to make a value judgment between syntactic alternatives; what is important is that such a judgment can be made.

Another area of decision making involves what Kellogg Hunt has referred to as clause consolidation. In an essay, "How Little Sentences Grow into Big Ones," he demonstrates how a superior adult writer consolidates seventeen sentences into one. (Kellogg Hunt, "How Little Sentences Grow into Big Ones," in NEW DIRECTIONS IN ELEMENTARY ENGLISH, ed. Alexander Frazier, Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1967, pp. 122-23). One transformation which makes this consolidation easy is the restrictive relative clause, which provides a way of specifying an infinite number of entities without seriously annoying the reader. This is the embedding process which allows us to say: "This is the dog that chased the cat that ate the rat that lived in the house that Jack built." In each case the relative clause modifies a general class noun to specify not an entire class but a single entity--not just any house but one house, the house that Jack built.

Deletions in the relative clause account for all modifiers embedded in the noun phrase, including the adjective, the prepositional phrase, and the participle. For this reason a writer can frequently exercise some options. "Today came a rain that was soothing" can be "Today came a soothing rain." "The squirrels that were playing in the yard. . ." can be "The squirrels playing in the yard. . . ." "The blue jay that is in the pear tree. . ." can be "The blue jay in the pear tree. . . ." I suppose every teacher of composition has at some time shown students how they can vary their sentences and reduce the number of words by utilizing these options. We don't really need the transformation rules, but I have discovered that they are powerful because of their very simplicity. Intuitive notions can be comfortably gathered under one hypothesis.

The non-restrictive relative clause and its reduction transformations are even more productive in teaching composition. Much of the so-called Christensen program in composition rests upon these transformations. All of us, I suppose, have valiantly tried to explain the difference between "The boys who were playing baseball lived in the apartment house" and "The boys, who were playing baseball, lived in the apartment house." The first, we say, means that only the boys that were playing baseball lived in the apartment house. The restrictive clause identifies the class noun, boys. The second, we say, means that the boys played baseball and incidentally lived in the apartment house, showing that we intuitively feel the non-restrictive clause is really an alternative to coordination or conjunction:. "The boys were playing baseball, and they lived in the apartment house." For this reason the clause is sometimes called a sentence modifier, or a free modifier. Jacobs and Rosenbaum admit that the precise form of the non-restrictive clause transformation and its relation to the restrictive clause are not yet clear (p. 101).

The relative clause reduction processes that work for the restrictive clause also work for the non-restrictive. It is probably safe to say that adjectives, prepositional phrases, and participles derived from non-restrictive clauses are also non-restrictive. The rhetorical advantage is not only reduced structures but also the possibility of re-positioning. Let me illustrate: "The November sky deepened his gloom. The sky was gray and overcast" can be rewritten: "The November sky, which was gray and overcast. . . ." This can then become "The November sky, gray and overcast, deepened his gloom" or "Gray and overcast, the November sky deepened his gloom." Because these reduced modifiers are free-moving, the writer can experiment with their positioning and alter his rhythms or change his emphasis. Notice how the positioning of three non-restrictive phrases before the subject allows Durrell to achieve a climax in the final noun clause that states his revelation: "Living on this bare promontory, snatched every night from darkness by Arcturus, far from the lime-laden dust of those summer afternoons, I see at last that none of us is properly to be judged for what happened in the past." (Lawrence Durrell, JUSTINE, p. 3.)

One structure derived from the non-restrictive clause deserves to be singled out for special emphasis. I refer to the appositive, traditionally described as a noun set down beside another noun to define, describe, or explain. Notice the derivation: "Mr. Webster scrawled a note to the chairman. Mr. Webster was the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts" can be transformed to "Mr. Webster, who was the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts. . . ." to "Mr. Webster, the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts. . . ." Appositives do not always have to follow the related noun phrase. Observe the positioning at the opening of the sentence: "A man of absolute principle, Webster was honored in Washington." Here the appositive concludes: "From distant states the people come to Washington--politicians, lobbyists, newspaper reporters, protesters, and tourists." An intensive study of the appositive in professional writing will show that it can be used to develop almost any logical relationship, including example, comparison, qualification, analysis, summary. It is worthwhile to pause and teach the stylistic use of the appositive, for amateurs seldom use it intuitively.

The absolute transformation is another structure widely used in descriptive and narrative writing but seldom, if ever, in speech. Although it is a rather literary structure, it is a convenient method for adding specific details to a general image presented in a matrix sentence: "He was a tall gaunt man, his face wrinkled with pain, his hair snow-white." Sometimes the absolute defines the verb: "He spoke more and more slowly, his voice dragging into threads of honey, his taunts uttered in dulcet tones." The transformation rule that changes a sentence into an absolute calls for merely the removal of tense: "His taunts (were) uttered in dulcet tones." Like other non-restrictive modifiers, absolutes can, of course, be repositioned.

This brief discussion of a few transformations does not, of course, prove the extent to which transformational grammars can be related to the teaching of writing. A modest proposal is that they can be useful in the evaluation of writing generated intuitively by Chomsky's language mechanism and Skinner's reinforcement. The rhetorical kinds of sentence arrangements evolving from conscious choice have been described in classical rhetorics as figures of speech; many of them can also be described more systematically as transformations.

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SOME RECENT QUESTIONS AND SOME NOT-SO-RECENT ANSWERS ABOUT TEACHING COMPOSITION

CAN GOOD COMPOSITION TEACHING BE DONE UNDER PRESENT CLASSROOM CONDITIONS?

"No.

This is a small and apparently unprotected word, occupying a somewhat exposed position; but it is upborne by indisputable truth.

If another answer is possible, if good teaching can be done under present conditions, it is passing strange that so few teachers have found out how to do it; that English composition teachers as a class, if judged by criticism that is becoming more and more frequent, are so abnormally inefficient. For every year the complaints become louder that the investment in English teaching yields but a small fraction of the desired returns. Every year teachers resign, break down, perhaps become permanently invalided, having sacrificed ambition, health, and in not a few instances even life, in the struggle to do all the work expected of them. Every year thousands of pupils drift through the schools, half-cared for in English classes where they should have constant and encouraging personal attention and neglected in other classes where their English should be watched over at least incidentally, to emerge in a more or less damaged linguistic condition, incapable of meeting satisfactorily the simplest practical demand upon their powers of expression. Much money is spent, valuable teachers are worn out at an inhumanly rapid rate, and results are inadequate or wholly lacking. From any point of view--that of taxpayer, teacher, or pupil--such a situation is intolerable."

(Edwin M. Hopkins, "Can Good Composition Teaching Be Done Under Present Conditions?" THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, January 1912, p. 1)

CAN ENGLISH TEACHERS WRITE?

". . .far too many of these experienced and prospective composition teachers are themselves, in the main, unable to write. What do I mean by that? I mean that they are unable to develop their ideas; that they refuse to organize them; that they have little feeling for words; that their diction is monotonous and flaccid; that they are afraid of independent thought and reflection. I mean, further, that they are either ignorant or, what is worse, shiftless in mechanical detail; that their sentences ramble in endless incoherence; that they frequently do not write sentences at all; that their paragraphs are largely merely penmanship indentations--sops to a forgotten rhetorical principle. I mean, in short, that--omitting consideration of the more subtle elements of good writing, such as individual style, imaginativeness, beauty of phrase and image--few composition teachers possess even first rate utilitarian capacity in expression."

(Howard Francis Seely, "Composition Work in Teacher Training Courses," THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1930, p. 235)

DO ENGLISH TEACHERS WRITE?

"A second obvious thing which has long bothered me is that teachers of writing do not write. Whether or not they can write need not be gone into. For the sake of diplomacy and amity let us admit that they can.

But the unfortunate and the important factor in the situation is that they do not write. And not being constant or even occasional writers they have no effective check on the principles and the devices they teach out of textbooks. I rather like the tone of assurance in Amos 'n' Andy when they say, 'Check and double check.' I wish I could hear it more often from English teachers when they read in textbooks that such and such a device will make for ease and force in paragraph development, or that a light essay should sound itstone of unseriousness before the reader begins to doze.

Teachers of any sort should know whether the 'facts' they teach are true. English teachers especially should know whether the tricks of composition they argue for are as live and effective in this early part of the twentieth century as they were in the early part of the eighteenth. Two hundred years sometimes makes a difference. The only check on theory is practice.

If nothing else offers, teachers can write out the exercises they assign to their students. I have often found such a turn enlightening, if not bewildering. A teacher needs perspective on himself, and on the textbook whence cometh his thunder. His own medicine, taken copiously, will give it to him.

Composition teachers are wont to check one textbook against another--a questionable practice. They should be able to oppose the experience of a practicing writer to the theory of a teacher of writing. They can do this by becoming writers themselves. I have both a profound respect for and a persistent distrust in writers of composition and rhetoric texts. May I lose neither my admiration nor my doubts. But the only way to know whether a trick will work or no is to try that trick.

Teachers of English will find opportunities to write if they set about hunting them. In the first place, they can answer letters. Then they can write criticisms of plays, recitals, art exhibits, and community entertainments. The managing editor of the local CLARION is always wanting somebody to 'review' the public exhibitions of the schools. His reporters naturally prefer crime, business, sports, and society, the 'Four Horsemen of Peace.'

Teachers of English can at least try to write short stories, articles, essays, and even novels. There is little harm in their writing poetry, if they be careful not to publish it. I am convinced that more free-lancing with a black pencil and less hieroglyphic castigation with a red pencil will vastly improve the effectiveness of the composition taught in America. At least it may heighten the prestige of members of the English department--both with students and the world.

If the English teaching race shows itself irreconcilably opposed to learning to write by writing a good deal, I favor the conscription of news reporters, advertising writers, short story writers, and novelists into the ranks of teachers of composition. I am sure they have something we do not have, something that is fundamental in learning to write. Maybe it is their having to write against a deadline, maybe it is their sane consideration of their reading publics, maybe it is merely the constant practice of writing. Whatever it is, they have a thing our students seem never to hear about."

(H. W. Davis, "Mastering Principles of Composition," THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, December 1930, pp. 799-800)

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MISUSES AND ABUSES IN COMPOSITION TEACHING?

"To one group, English composition represents a useful means of setting forth standards of morality and ethics; to another it becomes a medium for the introduction of children to the vocations of the future; to a third, it presents an unoccupied house-top for the zealous shouts of the unthinking patriot; and to a fourth, it furnishes a vehicle for the promulgation of community causes and enterprises worthy of the attention of every citizen. 'It pays to advertise' is a slogan by which America is known the world over. A common though scarcely elegant corollary of the idea is 'Get 'em young!' The result is that is pays best of all to advertise in the schools, and if in the schools, where better than in the class in composition? In fact, as our program of education has widened beyond the bounds of the school day, as the schools have taken upon themselves the combined responsibilities of home, church, business world, and state, it is inevitable that the burden must fall somewhere. There is not a subject in the curriculum but has assumed heavy loads but there is nothing, apparently, which cannot be taught through the medium of English composition. Moral training, school spirit, patriotism, safety first, worthy home membership, vocational guidance, thrift, public health, community problems--all these and more are thrust upon the teacher of composition and must be fitted somewhere into her program.

Such a situation is at once a challenge and a danger. As a medium of expression, composition progresses best where the child has something to say, where lively interest in a large number of subjects compels him to speech or writing. Its power in the dissemination of ideas is enormous, and the teacher of composition cannot and would not ignore this vital part of her responsibility. On the other hand, the primary business of the composition teacher is to help the boy or girl to discover the most effective means of expression of which he is capable. 'Is this thing worth expressing?' certainly. But equally important from her point of view is the question, 'Has this thing been expressed in the best manner of which the child is capable?' In other courses, the boy or girl may acquire information, but in no course (provided the opportunity is rightly used), so fully as composition, can he reflect upon and correlate in terms of a given purpose, the material already in his possession, and discover for himself the most effective means of communicating that material to others. Too frequently in the press of disseminating information upon a large variety of topics, the teacher of composition loses her chief function in the school, and the world wonders why our children, many of them, have a slipshod manner of expression, irrational ideas, and undeveloped powers of reflection and analysis."

(Dora V. Smith, "The Danger of Dogma Concerning Composition Content, THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, June 1926, pp. 415-416)

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD TOPICS FOR WRITING?

"The first essential of a good composition-topic is that it interest the pupil's mind and be fairly within his competency. All other considerations must bend to these. What Macaulay says about the 'dignity of history' may be applied to what seems to weigh like an incubus on some teachers of English,--an absurd sense of the dignity of composition-writing. As if the topic must sound well at any rate, whatever may follow in the way of dicussion. But there is no dignity of composition topics. Whatever interests the honest-minded boy or girl is a good theme for him or her to write about. Pupils often have a false sense of shame about writing for their teacher's eye on their homely interests. They will sometimes be found, no less than the conventional teacher, planning to have dainty or sonorous topics, regardless of their power of performance. Their interest is in the topic as such, in its imposing appearance on a programme or at the head of their exercise. From some source or other,--let us hope a non-pedagogic one,--a girl had received as a topic for an essay 'Self-Control.' Thereupon she was reduced to the necessity of searching for books and articles on this elusive theme. The subject was wholly outside of her thought, and she could find no assailable point on any side. If, as she was proceeding, she did finally effect an entrance, it was to sit within her subject like a cormorant: her work there was sure to be dishonest work, though the dishonesty was none of hers."

(S. Thurber, "I. Composition Topics," THE ACADEMY, October 1890, pp. 355-356)

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING PAPERS?

"1. Use red ink sparingly at all times.

2. Avoid harsh criticism and sarcasm. A keen sense of humor is an asset in composition teaching; thank your lucky stars for it. But don't develop it at the expense of your pupils.

3. Praise more than you censure.

4. In general, avoid the conventional proof marks in correcting themes. Insert the correct punctuation; write out the correct spelling; remodel a sentence that lacks unity.

5. Be catholic in your tastes. Don't force the children to write like one another--or like yourself. Don't use the red-ink pen to prune the young trees into uniformity.

6. See to it that your criticism is constructive rather than destructive.

7. Pay more attention to the fundamental elements of thinking than to the details of writing.

8. Emphasize naturalness and expressiveness rather than correctness and elegance.

9. Strive for the naturalness of talk rather than the formality of literature.

10. But drill unceasingly and patiently on the necessary writing conventions.

11. Watch carefully your assignments, that the subjects be within the grasp of your pupils.

12. Prevent probable mistakes by forewarning. To prevent, go before.

13. Have most of the composition work done at school. Watch the work and suggest and explain while the children are writing.

14. Occasionally return themes unmarked.

15. Occasionally let the pupils correct each other's themes. Try dividing your grade into couples for mutual advice in writing and criticizing."

(Walter Barnes, "The Reign of Red Ink," THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1913, pp. 164-165)

DID ENTERING COLLEGE FRESHMEN IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS WRITE ALL THAT WELL?

"There is a spirit of unrest, a feeling of dissatisfaction in educational circles over the poor work done by students in English composition. It seems to be generally admitted that the present requirements are not fulfilling the desires or realizing the hopes of educators. The complaint is heard year after year that boys and girls are coming to college more and more poorly prepared in this subject."

(C. S. Duncan, "A Rebellious Word on English Composition," THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1914, p. 154)

"It is difficult to believe, at times, that many of the writers of college-entrance papers are English-speaking boys. In the most mechanical points of execution--in hand-writing, spelling, punctuation--a large number are deficient to an appalling degree. They have no vocabulary; words do not appeal to them, or have for them the least significance. Any strength of thought or vividness of feeling that may occasionally struggle for utterance finds but one vent--slang. Unity or coherence of thought is seldom exhibited. Long chains of unrelated ideas are tacked together in a slack-rope sentence, pages long, with a lot of 'ands,' when a lot of 'buts' would be equally exact. Paragraphing is seldom attempted, unless after the fashion of one student who systematically indented the lines in blocks of five. And, worst of all, there is rarely to be found evidence of power of thought or range of reading, such as one ought reasonably to expect in young men of seventeen or eighteen, who regard themselves as ready for college work."

(C. C. Thach, "The Essentials of English Composition to be Taught in Secondary Schools," JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES, NEA, 1898, pp. 94-95)

". . .Between 1873 (when Harvard College for the first time held an examination in English) and 1884, I read several thousand compositions written in the examination-room upon subjects drawn from books which the candidates were required to read before presenting themselves. Of these a hundred, perhaps,--to make a generous estimate,--were creditable to writer or teacher or both. In 1884, Mr. (now Professor) Briggs, who then took charge of the examination, wrote to me as follows: 'Few /compositions/ were remarkably good, and few extraordinarily bad; a tedious mediocrity was everywhere.'

It is this tedious mediocrity which has amazed me year after year. In spelling, punctuation, and grammar some of the compositions are a great deal worse than the mass, and some a little better; but in other respects there is a dead level, rarely varied by a fresh thought or an individual expression. Almost all the writers use the same commonplace vocabulary--a very small one--in the same unintelligent way. One year, after reading two or three hundred compositions on 'The Story of 'The Tempest,' ' I found my recollections of both plot and characters so confused that I had to read the play to set myself right again.

. . .

If the dreary compositions written by the great majority of candidates for admission to college were correct in spelling, intelligent in punctuation, and unexceptionable in grammar, there would be some compensation; but this is so far from being the case that the instructors of English in American colleges have to spend much of their time and strength in teaching the A B C of the mother-tongue to young men of twenty--work disagreeable in itself, and often barren of result. Every year Harvard sends out men--some of them high scholars--whose manuscripts would disgrace a boy of twelve; and yet the college can hardly be blamed, for she cannot be expected to conduct an infant school for adults."

(Adams Sherman Hill, OUR ENGLISH, NY: Chautauqua Press, 1890, pp. 12-4,14-15)

WHAT IS SO SURPRISING ABOUT ENTERING COLLEGE FRESHMEN'S MEDIOCRE WRITING?

"Professor Hill 'is amazed' 'year after year' by the 'tedious mediocrity' of the written English work done by applicants for admission to Harvard College. Why should he be amazed? The writer confesses that he is amazed at Professor Hill's amazement. Every adult person much given to reading should, by the time he reaches years of discretion, have ceased to be amazed at any amount of tedious mediocrity in current printed literature. The writers of the newspapers and the magazines, of the novels that swarm upon us, and of the other books that for some reason or other we have to read, are presumably adults, writing on their own themes, in their comfortable rooms, without stress and strain of a time-limit, and with no important issue depending on the character of what they produce. Yet they deluge the world with tedious mediocrity. Teachers should not be moved by Professor Hill's amazement. Only he can be taken to task for asking the world's attention to his tedious mediocrity who has, unsolicited, thrust his mediocrity upon a public that had made no call for it and had created no opportunity for its appearance. Applicants for admission to college find themselves compelled to exhibit the content of their minds, on sundry topics imposed upon them, whether their minds have dwelt on these topics long and interestedly or not. The presumption is all against superiority of product. No teacher is amazed at the mediocrity of young people's work done in such circumstances."

(S. Thurber, "The Correction of School Compositions," THE ACADEMY, June 1891, pp. 259-260)

SHOULDN'T EVERY TEACHER BE A TEACHER OF COMPOSITION?

"What I must say here is that the special teacher of composition should be abolished. He does no good, and he stands in the way. The reading of a certain limited amount of juvenile writing for purposes of correction is a pleasing task, leading to personal relations, to an appreciation of individual difficulties, to a possible giving of wise counsel. But the reading of juvenile writing in great quantities is inconsistent with mental and physical health. All the teachers of a school should share equally this task of supervising the English writing. I do not see how any teacher, man or woman, can have the effrontery to claim to know good English better than the rest; and I do not see how any teacher can submit to the drudgery of having several times his share of this work thrust upon him.

. . .

Every teacher should be a teacher of composition. The pupils of a school should be divided among all the teachers, for composition purposes, and the principal should have his portion. . . ."

(Samuel Thurber, "Five Axioms of Composition Teaching," THE SCHOOL REVIEW, January 1897, pp. 15-16)

WHY DON'T STUDENTS WRITE WELL?

"At the risk of invoking the wrath of those twin departments of education and psychology, I might venture the suggestion that the almost universal use of the 'objective' type of examination question, from grade school through college, has done nothing to further the cause of literacy. The very obvious labor-saving convenience of presenting the student with a mimeographed, predigested set of answers, on which he places a check mark after 'true' or 'false,' selects one out of a multiple set, or writes a single word to complete a sentence, so that the whole may be graded by any assistant janitor who has the key--this, together with the comforting assurance that he is either right or wrong, that no element of individual judgment can enter into the final grade, and there can be no unfairness and no argument about it afterward--has thrust far into the background the much more difficult method of requiring the man to tell you what he knows."

(William L. Prosser, "English As She Is Wrote," THE ENGLISH JOURNAL, January 1939, p. 44)

"The defective preparation of college freshmen in elementary English is owing to the fact that most of the high schools have undertaken the work of 'fitting boys for the active duties of life.' "

(Francis D. Winston, "English and the High School," NATION, December 17, 1896, p. 455)

FIVE EASY PIECES - A PARADIGM FOR STYLE AND STYLISTICS IN COMPOSITION

Tim Scannell, Westwood High School, Mesa

Don't define STYLE unless you're skilled at climbing walls, nor expound upon STYLE lest you sink with nuance into a slough of despondency, nor finally approve all STYLES - such pretension will quickly manifest external tics and internal nausea as each pristine innocent discovers Segal's LOVE STORY, as each erstwhile he-man discovers Robbins' THE ADVENTURERS.

The vigorous nod of agreement or disagreement with the above is both warning and way toward a successful course in style and stylistics in the composition classroom: objectify yourself to comprehend personal bias, and then use that understanding to create, institute and evaluate the course objective, which generally stated is to widen and deepen the tools of sensitivity and awareness in young people that their growth increasingly become a function of personal discovery, analysis and evaluation rather than a slavish function of fad and ephermeral cultural attachment - that is, "I love Alice Cooper" (I feel wonderful with what Alice expressed last night and will ride high today saying only that I love him). Such purely emotive reactions, without appreciation, analysis and integration into the personality, are extremely commonplace whether through encounters with fiction authors, poets, artists, or actors. These emotional meetings are also totally useless if incognizant of what actually 'turned one on': elements of style.

The following paradigm is essentially a nucleus of resources to display, illustrate and generate style and stylistics, affording the teacher various models for instruction involving a day, week, term or semester of lessons, tasks and discussions, while simultaneous providing student autonomy in terms of choice and responsibility for analysis and judgement. The five easy pieces are: OBJECTIVE, THE CLASSROOM, MODELS, THE JOURNAL, AND EVALUATION.

OBJECTIVE: To widen and deepen the tools effecting sensitivity and awareness in young people. Specific content is not mentioned because language study - Literature, Composition, Expression - encompasses all modes of human expressiveness: music, dance, film, painting, sculpture, architecture, prose, poetry, drama, non-fiction, and fantasy, all of which are communicative stylistic structures exploring discrete, narrow, contents. If this strikes one as an outline for a humanities course, it reflects the bias of the author who sees the English classroom in purpose and intent as a place where humanity, past, present, future, is experienced, and where human beings grow on the linguistic front - all fronts!

THE CLASSROOM: The classroom should be sensual in terms of resources and references: art objects, advertisements, cartoons and comic strips (very effective visually when blown up using the opaque or as transparencies using the overhead), maps, tapes, magazine articles and student compositions, are all necessary for visual, verbal, conceptual and terminological illustration. Each item should have an impact that will generate, variously, discussion, writing, one to five minute oral analyses by students, or 'set' evaluations (e.g. landscapes by Moran, Church, Inness, Whistler, Marin, Hopper, and O'Keeffe). Comparison/contrast sets are easy to create, and they encourage the best type of writing assignment while insuring choice and variety of concept. School librarians have hundreds of books on art or the photographic essay (an excellent and compelling slide set was created by a colleague as enrichment to CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY). Our librarian, just this year, added over one thousand prints to her usually unnoticed and unused collection, so discover and use what the school library has in that back room of dusty bound volumes of magazines (also too little used by most teachers), then create and arrange a writing or discussion concept to suit your purposes, perhaps a set of portraits or cityscapes or flowers or animals which can be taped to the four walls, your forty desks arranged accordingly, ten facing each set. APPLIED COMMON SENSE IS THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE.

Such preparatory tasks are essential for the instructor, no matter how onerous they may seem initially. The resultant comparison/contrast given the students, since the germinal assembly is intrinsically complex, will produce myriads of the kinds of complex sentences and levels of usage that language teachers yearn to see. Another example: twenty cartoons from major magazines on the theme, "The American Businessman." Use variously colored Magic markers and the opaque projector (or make transparencies), plus thirty minutes of your time to create the desired sequence and complexity. The theme's inherent spectrum runs the gamut: Zenith-like boosterism to sarcastic condemnation (RAMPARTS). Enlarged opaque images can be traced on posterboard or butcher paper. Here again, find out what your colleagues have made--one working at my school has made scores of slides of cartoons from the major magazines.

Two final items concerning the classroom: references and desk arrangement. The following stylebooks, all now in paperback, are the best I've discovered: Strunk and White's THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE, Graves' THE READER OVER YOUR SHOULDER, Read's ENGLISH PROSE STYLE, and the fine series by Brooks and Warren on drama, poetry and rhetoric. Secure multiple copies of all of them. Excluding yourself, it is assumed you're the finest 'reference' in the room, two other references collected and arranged by yourself will prove extremely helpful in lesson planning and in providing 'idea-books' for students: a notebook of style samples from fiction, poetry, magazines, newspapers, etc., arranged chronologically or by author or genre, or by whatever is meaningful to you personally; and finally a notebook of articles to share with students collected from personal subscriptions (CCC, CE, EJ, MFS, AETB), along with those xeroxed after perusal of one of the many fine annotated bibliographies on the subject, my recommendation being Louis Milic's STYLE AND STYLISTICS.

Desk arrangement, as a general rule, is a function of what the class is doing: discussion, a large circle; viewing objects or prints, a dividing of the desks into groups of five to eight clustered round or facing the material; a particular genre or thematic set of fiction, groups of five to eight desks clustered separately about the room (e.g. War Fiction: Revolutionary Period, 1812, 1848, the Civil War (North), the Civil War (South), 1898, WWI, WWI, Korea, Vietnam); and finally arrangements for writing can be rows, clusters, or random scattering, but allow those who wish to sit in groups to do so--students enjoy reading the papers of others in the process of being written, and they will unknowingly save the instructor's jaws from aching by the incessant, careful articulation of correct spellings, and with one hundred fifty compositions each week, who among us can spell anyway??!! The kids are very good at such instruction themselves, so allow them to do that while you involve yourself with the more interesting conundrums of structure, organization, style, usage and adequate support of concept, since these are the core of your training and expertise.

MODELS AND THE JOURNAL:

> The real difficulty in discussing style comes at this point. Style. . .is an over-all result. It is a result determined

> by the working together of sentence structure, vocabulary, figures of speech, rhythm, and many other elements. . . 'Style is not an isolable quality of writing; it is writing itself.' (Brooks and Waren, MODERN RHETORIC, p. 312)

This quote, here, at the heart of the paradigm, might at first glance indicate an insuperable ambiguity concerning the successful teaching of style and stylistics with some rigor and exactness, but accept this as a restatement of the "warning and way" given in the opening paragraphs: avoid the dogmatic while nurturing a widening and intensified gyre of sensitivity within your students.

Models and the journal are considered simultaneously because the latter is the student's record (assignments, notes, observations after discussions, vocabulary) of probes into the former. For example, and it is assumed the student knows the meaning and application of title, introduction, body and conclusion in his own writing, here is a typical, successful, assignment I've given my students. Read the following - Lawrence's "The Snake", Oliver's "The World's Most Dangerous Snake", Hudson's "Liaison With a Black Snake", and Dickinson's "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" (a mimeographed packet). With emphasis on what is common to these pieces and what is different among them, discuss and evaluate them in terms of TONE.

A word on terminology. There are several key vocabulary conceptual tools which cut, shave, file, drill, etc. which the student needs, and which might very well occupy discussion, notetaking, and examples the first week of the course, filling the first few pages of student journals with dictionary definitions, stylebook definitions, and copied examples from literature. I've found the following vocabulary very helpful: TONE with these subheadings: ARGUMENT, AUDIENCE, SPEAKER, OCCASION, DICTION, METAPHOR, and ATTITUDE; SENTENCE STRUCTURE, VOCABULARY, TROPES, RHYTHM. In all my dealings with style and stylistics, I've used the concept of Rhythm least because, first of personal boredom with prosodic analysis, and second, the study is too intricate for high school students.

A final suggestion before discussing evaluation. Remember not to forget to use the thousands of books, prints, slides, editorial cartoons, cartoon, comic strips, articles from contemporary magazines, as well as the infinite spectrum of our own literature in building a personal nucleus in this admittedly broadly structured subject of style and stylistics. Always turn to imagination and materials at hand.

EVALUATION: This problematic area could very well be the hardest of the five easy pieces. For example, is an evaluation of cartoons concerning the Watergate (Mauldin, Laurie, Stayskal, Borgstedt, Feiffer, and Oliphant) less valuable than an evaluation of man's destiny in the following poems: Jeffers' "Hurt Hawks", Roethke's "The Bat", Tate's "The Groundhog", and Bishop's "The Fish"? Although I personally have no trouble shaking my head no without the slighest hesitancy, let me explain why. Recalling that the objective of the course was a widened, deepened sensitivity within the student on the linguistic front, each student in constructing his paper has 1) grappled with a real arrangement outside his 'self', has 2) accepted responsibility for evaluation, has 3) worked with the most difficult type of cognitive process, and has finally 4) created an organized piece of composition, a well-formed presentation with an enlightening title, complete introduction (attraction of reader, thesis or central idea, method of approach), a substantive body (examples, details, transitions and support of judgements), and an effective conclusion (restatement, emphaes discovered, final judgements).

Now I prefer the poems, but what is a question of taste, and though one group of artists dealt with "cultural ephemera" while the other "major literature", I value each equally as manifestations of our culture, and feel rather certain in fact that the cartoons drive the culture further than the poems. I would prefer the reverse, but I love Alice Cooper too.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH TESTS OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION

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(I wish to thank Edward F. Kelly, Center for Instructional Development, Syracuse University, for reacting to an early draft of this paper.)

What you can do with written composition tests depends on how you view learning. Some of us see education as it is described by a behavioristic metaphor, that the process of education is the process of changing people's behaviors in observable manners (Ralph Tyler, BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1950, p. 4) while others of us see education best described by a biological metaphor, with each child having an essentially unique set of "needs, potentialities, and experiences with which to transact with the environment" (Elliot W. Eisner, "Instructional and Expressive Objectives: Their Formulation and Use in Curriculum", in James W. Popham, Elliot W. Eisner, Howard J. Sullivan, and Louis L. Tyler's INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES, AERA Evaluation Monograph #3, Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1969, p. 6). In either case, the idea of education is to produce adults--former students--who know their culture, can use it, and can contribute to it. The differences are not in the outcomes of learning, but in the ways of achieving those outcomes.

Let's say that you subscribe to the behavioristic metaphor and you see yourself as changing the behaviors of your students in prespecified ways. For you, a test of composition is a reflection of the changes that have occurred in your students. You know, for example, how you would like your students to look in terms of their composition skills (in fact, you probably have a set of instructional objectives describing them), and you have similar kinds of information on what they were like when the semester began from pretest results. Testing your students now tells you what they currently look like, and through comparison of the current and pretest scores, changes in their composition skills can be estimated.

But if your view is closer to the biological metaphor, the test tells you something different. Education, you assert, is an unfolding, developing process where the teacher, as an artist, supervises the development of the student. Final outcomes can be estimated in advance, but only in general terms since each student is different initially, and each student will be different at the end. A test for you is akin to the painter's stepping back from his easel to contemplate where to go from here. Like the behaviorist teacher, you see the test results indicating what the student is like now; unlike the behaviorist, what you see is not a set of in transit readings to be used for midcourse correction, but rather it is an orientation providing new directions, maybe, or new insights into the reason for the trip. In either the behavioristic or biological case, the test results can be cause for satisfaction, confusion, or dissatisfaction.

What you can do with tests of written composition depends on the tests' characteristics. These characteristics are reliability, validity, test format, and the criteria for adequacy of the students' performances (i.e., norm or criterion referenced).

Reliability is the psychometric term for consistency; if a test is reliable, it is (1) homogenous (i.e., all related questions or tasks intercorrelate well with each other), and (2) it is stable over time. Both of these issues are important regardless of your educational philosophy; if the test is not homogenous, you have no way of knowing whether the student's score is due to his knowledge and ability, or to random error (i.e., static in the system). Similarly, if the test is not stable over time, you have no way of knowing whether the differences you've observed in a student's performance (this test score versus the last one, for example), are due to changes in the student (biological metaphor), changes made to the student (behavioristic metaphor), or just random error due to the test's instability. No matter how you view education, you should demand that any tests you are asked to use have demonstrated reliability.

If you are a behaviorist, you want to know if test scores correlate with whatever the criterion behavior happens to be; you certify that a test is a valid one if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Norman Gronlund, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN TEACHING, NY: Macmillan, 1965, p. 59). You are satisfied, for example, if a test of punctuation use can be shown to correlate with accurate punctuation. As a biologist, you also look for tests to measure what they are supposed to measure, but your criterion is different from that of the behaviorist: you do not always specify in advance the behavior sought, and what you are looking for is as dependent on why the student said what he did as it is dependent on what the student said. This means that forced choice tests (multiple choice, true/false, matching, etc.) are generally invalid for you. They are invalid because they constrain the students responses and do not allow the students to indicate why they believed in the answers they chose.

Non-objective formats avoid this particular threat to their validity. Open-ended questions, such as short answer or essay questions, require responses that allow the biologist to reconstruct the student's thought processes as well as their final products. Such tests allow the teacher to catch glimpses of the way the students interact with their intellectual environments.

Test format (i.e., objective versus non-objective) and the way it relates to your educational viewpoint, is different from reliability and is closely related to validity. Since tests are generally closer to the behaviorist metaphor, test formats can be matched to behaviorist needs more closely than they can be matched to those of the biologist ones. For example, entire books (and good ones, too) have been written on how to construct tests from objectives (these sets of objectives are sometimes called tables of specifications. See Benjamin S. Bloom, J. Thomas Hastings, and George F. Madaus, HANDBOOK ON SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE EVALUATION, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1971). Using those objectives, multiple choice questions in particular (though objective items in general) can be constructed "to behavioral specifications." But since there are not necessarily specific statements of what is desired of a student within a biological framework (the reader is encouraged to read Eisner's discussion of expressive objectives. James W. Popham, Elliot W. Eisner, Howard J. Sullivan, and Louis L. Tyler, INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES, AERA Evaluation Monograph #3, Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1969, pp. 1-28), it is not necessarily true that objective items apply in this metaphor. It is true, of course, objective tests can be used to test students' knowledge of conventions (such as punctuation and spelling), and a biologist would not want to overlook them completely. But for collecting certain kinds of information, they are of really limited utility.

The alternative to forced choice tests is the use of non-objective techniques. They have a limitation, though, in that they are harder to score; it is possible for different people to score the same set of non-objective test responses and come out with vastly different scores. This does not happen all the time, of course, and there are procedures which can be used to assure that scoring will be reliable (i.e., consistent and stable). These procedures range from those producing non-specific scores of general quality (Fred W. Godshalk, Frances Swinford, and William Coffman, THE MEASUREMENT OF WRITING ABILITY, Princeton: ETS, 1966) to those resulting in highly specific scores describing well defined attributes which were not necessarily described in advance (Henry B. Slotnick, "Using Interviews and Examples in Eliting Judgments on Complex Phenomena", presented at the 1973 Annual meeting of the National Council for Measurement in Education, New Orleans). These procedures all take much more time than do those for scoring objective tests, but if you are willing to take the time, you can assure yourself that these non-objective results were produced fairly, accurately, and reliably.

There is another issue related to test format in written composition tests: the relationship of the task the student is asked to perform to actual written composition. You attack this problem in a straight forward manner if you are a biologist: you ask your students to write essays. There are problems here, of course, ranging from scoring (which has already been discussed) to those relating to what the student actually writes. It's possible that he will only use simple constructions which he has mastered (rather than using more complex, riskier ones) when you would have liked him to experiment with his writing. It's possible that a student will choose a rhetorical task because he thinks it will please you rather than one that interests him. The kind of openendedness allowed by essay questions is the antithesis of what a behaviorist is looking for. As a behaviorist, you argue that unless each student is asked to handle identical tasks in identical manners, there is no way of comparing students' responses with each other or, more importantly, comparing the writings of the same student on different occasions to find out if learning (i.e., a change in behavior) has taken place. You resolve this problem by using objectively scored items on your tests. There is no doubt that these questions are related to actual writing: the items certainly have content validity (i.e., they cover content related to composition); and the performances on the test can be convincingly related to solid performance measures of writing (Fred W. Godshalk, Frances Swinford, and William Coffman, THE MEASUREMENT OF WRITING ABILITY, Princeton: ETS, 1966).

The last characteristic of written composition tests is criteria for adequacy, either norm-criterion-referenced. Norm-referenced tests are the ones we are most familiar with: scores on them indicate a student's performance relative to some normative group. Characteristically, these scores are reported in terms of centiles. These scores provide no usable information to you as a biologist (they certainly tell you nothing about the student's performance in terms of what he did or did not do let alone why he answered the way he did) or to you as a behaviorist (since they do not indicate the behaviors mastered or those incompletely handled). They do provide information that is good to have if you are trying to find the students who know the most, or least, or you're uninterested in identifying precisely what that knowledge is.

Criterion-referenced tests, on the other hand, tell you precisely what the student was able to do. This kind of test should be sought out by both the behaviorist and the biologist. The usefulness of criterion-referencing to you as a behaviorist is obvious; if you are interested in showing changes in behavior mastery, you need to be able to show which behaviors have been mastered, which have not. As a biologist, you want to know what the student is doing, the kind of information provided by criterion-referenced test. The problem, of course, is stating the criterion to be met. I have been experimenting with a procedure that allows the establishment of criteria based on the assumption that good writing is like good companionship: you know it when you encounter it (Henry B. Slotnick, "Using Interviews and Examples in Eliting Judgments on Complex Phenomena," presented at the 1973 Annual meeting of the National Council for Measurement in Education, New Orleans.)., and early results are encouraging, though certainly not conclusive.

Clearly, behaviorism and biology do not provide the only metaphor for education (Elliot W. Eisner, "Instructional and Expressive Objectives: Their Formulation and Use in Curriculum," in James W. Popham, Elliot W. Eisner, Howard J. Sullivan, and Louis L. Tyler's INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES, AERA Evaluation Monograph #3, Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1969, pp. 1-29). These metaphors, though, are popular now and, on the surface at least, seem to almost be antithetical. However, when testing in written composition is at issue, subscribers to either of the two metaphors find that their needs are similar as far as reliability and test nature are concerned, and that their needs overlap considerably in the areas of validity and format.

WRITING SAMPLE: AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

Marguerite Townsend, Jefferson County Public Schools, Lakewood, Colorado

When a school district is faced with a dilemma, someone must make decisions quickly. Our district had a problem and I was to be the decision maker. The question which faced us was: how well are children functioning in the area of written communication? The Jefferson County community was demanding to know and had expressed their displeasure with what was happening, by defeating a bond issue--the first to lose since the county became one of the fastest growing areas in the United States.

The Jefferson County Language Arts Program had defined skills, concepts and application kinds of activities that students should experience. Whenever assessment was mentioned, however, there was a tendency to hide one's head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. When the state legislature passed a bill which, in over-simplified terms, stated that each district must specifically identify instructional programs and report on how well the objectives are being met, we knew that we could hide our heads in sand no longer. A consensus existed among our staff that standardized tests are poor tools to assess how well children write. What should we do?

We contacted Dr. Henry Slotnick, who was then Assistant to the Director, Research and Analysis Department of the National Assessment of Educational Process. He had been a participant in the 1969-1970 attempt to assess (on a national level) how well children write. A few Jefferson County children had been a part of that endeavor, so we knew about the results. Dr. Slotnick was assigned at that time to the Denver office and was readily available. He was enthusiastic about our project and met with the central language arts staff several times for planning and preparation and worked with us throughout the process.

THE PROCESS

STEP 1

Any good language arts program must include elements leading to effective written communication. The specifics of these elements can be assessed by the teacher through objective referenced tests or by an item analysis of norm referenced tests. Whether a student uses these specifics (organization, mechanics, imagination, legible handwriting, accurate spelling, etc.) can best be determined, however, by asking for a sample of the student's best effort. Therefore, plans were made to ask all sixth and ninth grade students to write on a given topic during late January and early February, 1973.

The group which prepared the plan and schedule included Dr. Henry Slotnick and Jefferson County staff, Dwight Cool, Director of Research, Harold Hoyt, Director of Testing, Judy Hermann, Bob Evans and Marguerite Townsend, District Language Arts personnel. Every effort was made to choose times which would be reasonable for all concerned--the schools, the computer schedule and central office staff committments. One of the primary reasons for the mid-year schedule was that it would allow three months for in-school intensive work with students exhibiting deficiencies.

PLAN

A schedule was then submitted to the school administrators which included: 1) when the material (topic, procedures, paper) would arrive at the schools; 2) when and how the writing should occur; 3) when the papers were due to the District Language Arts Department for rating.

Four sixth and four ninth grade teachers were invited to determine the criteria for scoring with Dr. Slotnick was consultant, and scorers were selected to read and rate the papers according to the established criteria.

A 1-2-3-4 rating scale was determined as follows: 1) students needing intensive help; 2) less than adequate for grade level; 3) grade level competency; 4) high competency.

STEP 2

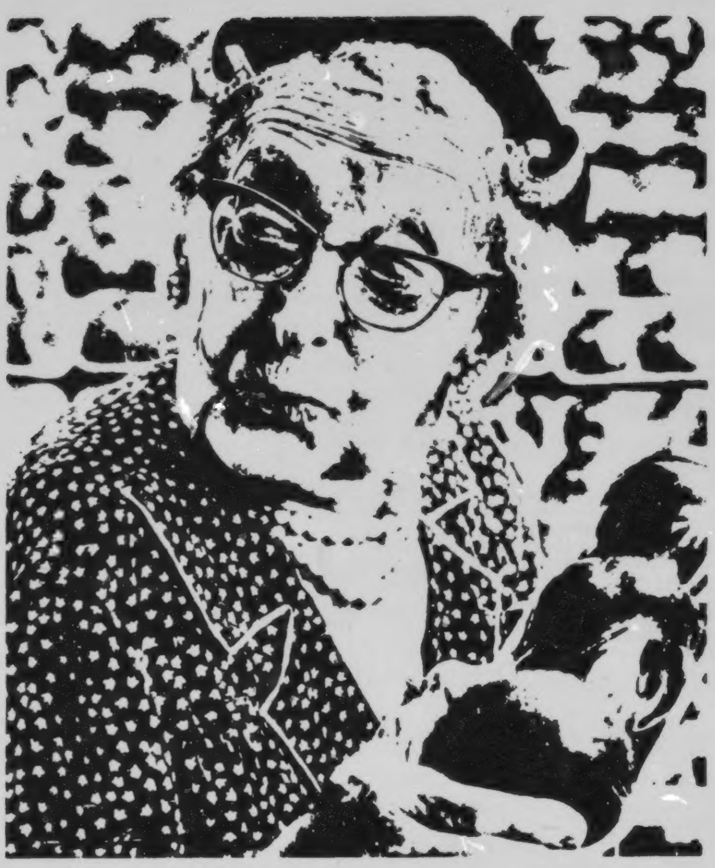
Specific information as follows was sent to all teachers involved in the process.

PROCEDURES

PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE WRITING SAMPLE

1. Explain to the students that they will be assessed on their writing ability. The writing they do will be rated by adult graders in a carefully controlled situation.
2. Explain the reasons for writing the sample, relating them to prior classroom experiences. Be sure to include the following items in a vocabulary suitable to your level of instruction:
   a. to provide the opportunity for students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses in the skill of writing and to set goals for improvement if needed.
   b. to assess each student's achievement in writing.
   c. to assess the effectiveness of the language arts goal of effective written communication.
3. Discuss what will be done with the results of the writing sample.
   a. The result, i.e., a number on a scale from 1-4, according to established criteria for students at grade level, will be given to the teacher and the student. Results will also be sent to the teachers at the next school.
   b. The paper after being analyzed and discussed with each learner by his teacher, will be placed in the student's cumulative record file for future reference.

WRITING SAMPLE TOPIC



Here is a picture of a woman with some tomatoes. Look at the picture for awhile and decide what is going on. When you have decided, tell in writing what is happening in the picture and what is likely to happen next.

(This picture was used in Jeffco's initial attempt because it had been used successfully in the National Assessment. The directions are purposely ambiguous to allow maximum latitude in approaches to the topic.)

WRITING SAMPLE DAY

1. Give the students the following instructions:
   a. You will be given 50 minutes to organize and write your sample. No extra time will be allowed.
   b. Write your sample on ONE SIDE ONLY of the paper provided. There is no specific length for your sample. The length should be determined by the idea you want to communicate. Ask for more paper if you need it. Use a sheet of your own paper to plan your sample if you wish.
   c. Use pencil or pen for the sample, whichever you use more easily.
   d. Arrange your paper in a neat, legible manner.
   e. Write your first and last name in the upper right-hand corner of each sheet of paper you turn in. Use full legal name, not nickname. Beneath that, write the name and number of your school, your teacher's name, and the school you will be attending in the fall.
      Example: Camille C. Graham
      O'Connell Jr. High #6720
      Mrs. Lorenz
      Alameda High
   f. You may not ask questions once you begin work. Are there any final questions?
   g. When you are finished writing, carefully proofread your paper. You may use a dictionary if you wish.
2. Distribute the paper and make certain the proper information is filled in at the top of the page. This is important. Distribute the topic.
3. Provide students with 50 minutes of uninterrupted writing time.

PROCEDURES AFTER THE WRITING SAMPLE

1. Collect the writing samples at the end of the writing time.
2. Insure that each paper has the proper information filled in at the top of the page.
3. Be sure the name is written as it appears in the data bank. In case there is a duplication of names within the same grade level, write the student's number on his paper. The number can be obtained from the office.
4. Permit any students who missed the original day of testing to complete the sample before the dates listed below. No papers can be accepted after the due date.
5. Staple pages together if a student writes more than one page. Be sure the name is on each page.
6. Send the Writing Sample papers via the Pony to the LANGUAGE ARTS DEPARTMENT in the AD BUILDING no later than the following dates:
   Grade 6 - February 10 Grade 9-February 16

No marks will be made on the papers, but the criteria for rating will be returned with the papers.

NOTE: Each paper will then be rated by at least two people trained to use scoring criteria developed by the district. Papers will be returned to the schools when they have been completed and tabulated. A print-out will be sent to the present school and the 1973-1974 receiving school.

Intensive instruction should occur with these students receiving scores of 1 or 2.

STEP 3

This information was sent to both administrators and teachers and was available to any interested people.

PROCEDURE USED FOR SCORING

1. Five schools were selected to represent varying types of communities in Jeffco and 150 papers were pulled at random from these school papers. These were duplicated and used for training sessions with the judges and scorers.
2. All papers for a grade level were then sorted in rotation into 90 separate stacks of approximately 66 papers each. Thus some of each school's papers appeared in nearly every stack.
3. Four teachers from the grade level of the students who wrote the papers were invited to serve as judges and established the criteria for scoring.
    a. Fifty of the 150 papers selected under #1 were read by each judge and separated into 4 stacks representing categories as follows: 1) students needing intensive help; 2) students operating at levels not yet adequate for grade level; 3) students operating with grade level competency; 4) students with high competency.
    b. Discussion occurred concerning the placement of each paper and differences in judging were reconciled.
    c. Judges then identified the characteristics or attributes of papers in each of the 4 categories. This became the criteria for judging all papers at a given grade level. (See attached criteria.)
    d. With the criteria firmly in mind the judges read 100 more papers selected under #1, and collectively categorized them 1-2-3-4. Tabulation of this procedure established validity of the process as follows:

        49 papers - all 4 judges scored the same
        41 papers - 1 judge varied 1 point
        10 papers - varied scoring

    e. It was decided that the student's total score would be the combined ratings of 2 readers, as a few papers always show variances which make them difficult to categorize, i.e., good ideas with lack of mechanical skills or good mechanical skills with no sound idea.
4. Following the establishment of the criteria, 10 certified teachers who were hired from substitute teacher lists, met to score the papers for the specified grade level, i.e., all 6th grade papers were completely scored before beginning 9th grade papers.
    a. The training session began with a study of the criteria established by the judges. Then the same reading and sorting procedure, as used with the judges, was followed until accuracy in scoring was determined.
    b. Each scorer then read one of the 90 packets of papers per hour followed by a 10 minute break. Five sets per day were required plus the logging of scores on the data cards. As the first scores were logged, they were covered with tape so not to influence the second reader. Therefore, at the top of each paper are two pairs of numbers, one of which is covered by tape. Example: 3-4 ; 10-4. The first number is the code number of the rater. The second number represents the score the student received from the rater.
    c. Clerical work necessary was performed by high school students who worked from 1:00 to 5:00 each day. Eventually all papers were re-grouped according to school and returned by March 15.

CRITERIA FOR GRADE SIX

	MECHANICS	SPELLING	STRUCTURE	HANDWRITING
HIGH COMPETENCY	Quotes; few if any punctuation errors; indentations	Nearly perfect	Occasional complex sentences, used correctly; excellent organization and sequencing (got to the point, ideas tied together); verb agreement, good use of connectives	Legible; neat appearance (margins)
GRADE LEVEL COMPETENCY	Occasional tense problems	Occasional wrong homonyms	Good sentence and paragraph structure with occasional errors; fewer paragraphs, less well-developed	
LESS THAN ADEQUATE FOR GRADE LEVEL	Agreement problems; word choice errors	Misspelling of common words, (e.g., dose for does)	Lack of paragraph structure; paragraphs structured irregularly; run-on sentences; sentence fragments; word omissions and repetitions; repetition of sentence beginnings (She's, This lady, etc.)	Less legible than grade level competency
NEEDS INTENSIVE HELP	Punctuation not used correctly (Often "sprinkled")	Much misspelling of common words	Generally no concept of proper sentence structure; fragments	Generally poor legibility

CRITERIA FOR GRADE SIX

	STYLE	IDEAS
HIGH COMPETENCY	"Grabbed you"; quick, sound beginning; conclusion ties ideas together; continuity; formal level of usage	Well-developed descriptions and characterizations; went beyond statements suggested in instructions and first impression in picture; maturity (e.g., awareness demonstrated by use of five senses and surroundings to build character and paper
GRADE LEVEL COMPETENCY	Sometimes formal level of usage, sometimes conversational	Lesser use of originality and cleverness, but still go beyond first impression and statements in instructions
LESS THAN ADEQUATE FOR GRADE LEVEL	Dull, uninteresting; rambles; no beginnings or conclusions; no titles; overuse of adjectives (delicious, sumptuous, red, ripe tomatoes); meaningless conversations	Trite ideas left undeveloped; do not go beyond statements about the picture; no character or setting development
NEEDS INTENSIVE HELP	No continuity of ideas	Ideas unrelated to topic

CRITERIA FOR GRADE NINE	CREATIVITY AND STYLE	MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS	SENTENCE STRUCTURE
High Competency	Creative Depth into human condition Sophisticated Imaginative Characterization Insight Go beyond literal picture Go beyond the instructions Maintain reader interest More story-like than descriptive	Consistently followed Few errors in paragraphing dialog Accurate use of punctuation (It doesn't interfere with pace or clarity to reader.)	Variety of patterns Few sentence errors (If they are present, they are not distractive)
Grade Level	Attempts & non-attempts to go beyond literal picture Accurate descriptions Superficiality Interesting sometimes Still story-like	Less consistent use of conventions Attempted, but not always successfully Errors in punctuation Correct paragraphing of dialog	Sound sentence structure 3 or 4 errors - run ons, fragments (These errors do distract) More prosaic; less variety Use of s-v pattern frequently Fewer attempts to write sophisticated sentences
Below Grade Level	Don't go beyond literal picture Lack of creativity General vagueness (Don't know what to say.) Skeleton narrative-literal picture only described Few uses of dialog Extremes of simple style to stream of consciousness, i.e., thinking out loud	Limited use of conventions Several punctuation errors, especially commas Incorrect dialog paragraphing Careless end punctuation errors	Monotonous sentences - more rigid s-v pattern use Frequent sentence errors Simpler sentences
Need Help	Appear forced, constrained, restrained Minimal effort Blah! Wrote because they had to set something on paper	Almost no use of conventions Errors in punctuation	Haphazard sentences Fragments, run ons Thoughts shift within the same sentence

CRITERIA FOR GRADE NINE

	HANDWRITING	SPELLING	VOCABULARY AND WORD CHOICE
High Competency	Legible	Few spelling errors (If they are present, they don't distract.) Few misspellings of common words	Vocabulary used beyond grade level Descriptive word choices Figurative language Aware of connotations as well as denotations
Grade Level	Legible	Common words misspelled- few errors Phonetic spellings Spelling demons and homonyms misspelled Occasional wordiness	Less descriptive words used Less resourceful word choices Vocabulary limited, but more formal than in speaking
Below Grade Level	Legible - usually	Blend reversals in spelling Syllables omitted Words recognizable though misspelled	Usage errors - sv agreement - pronoun/antecedent More conversational; over use of "well"
Need Help	Some are legible; some illegible	Poor spelling -often unrecognizable Careless spellings - same word spelled differently in the same paper	Limited vocabulary Word omissions Usage errors, i.e., who's, whose, etc. Mixed and unclear verb tense S-V agreement errors Limited use of word choices Colloquial language Pronoun antecedent errors

CRITERIA FOR GRADE NINE	PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT
High Competency	Good sense of paragraphing Unites ideas that are similar Dynamic flow of ideas
Grade Level	Contained flow, but not dynamic Distinct beginning, middle and end Strong attempt at paragraphing, but not always successful Had paragraph sense most of the time
Below Grade Level	Incorrect dialog paragraphing
Need Help	Flow is halted by errors in spelling, punctuation, etc. Little organization of thoughts (Just writes them down)

STEP 4

The following information was returned to the schools with the papers:

WHEN PAPERS ARE RETURNED TO SCHOOLS - -

1. Attached is a copy of the criteria used in scoring the papers. Teachers, please use your judgment in explaining the criteria to your group as they examine their papers. Experience tells us that not much improvement occurs unless students know what specifics they must work on to improve and are given opportunity to practice in those areas. We strongly recommend using the same criteria for evaluation of future writing. It is essential that students understand the components of effective written communication--not once, but on a continuing basis.
2. Bear in mind that even with precise criteria as was developed from the writer's papers, some subjectivity in evaluation is unavoidable, and this fact was the basis for deciding that 2 readers would score every paper and that the recorded score would be the sum of the 2. If students should question a discrepancy in two different grades on the same paper, your discussion with them of why such differences occur can be a valuable learning experience, since all of us face similar discrepancies in judgment regularly throughout our lives.
3. Attached also are several duplicated student samples for each category to use with students in a study session or as a model for teachers. If students are able to understand the criteria and identify the criteria characteristics in the sample papers, they will more likely become aware of the components of effective writing. (Enclosed papers are at the end of this article if you care to use them.)
4. When the data print-out is returned you will find a total score which reflects the combined scores of the two readers. Eight is the best score possible and 2 is the lowest. The print-outs going to the receiving schools are inaccurate since some teachers did not have students put the receiving school name on their papers.
5. After discussing the Writing Sample papers with the students, put the papers in the writers' cumulative folders.
6. At the 9th grade or perhaps with selected groups of 6th graders, students could write another assignment, and then form small groups and grade each others papers according to the criteria. A next step would be for each to then grade his own. In this way students can also increase their awareness of the components of good writing.
7. In the Professional Growth Program for second semester on page 4, Judy and Marguerite offer to come to individual schools to work with teachers in the process of teaching writing skills. If we can be of service, please ask. We can also work with groups of teachers to establish grade level criteria from the students' own writing.
8. Students who fall in the 2 category and receive a "cum" grade of 4-5 can probably be brought to grade level competency with sufficiently motivated practice and by focusing on their main problems one at a time. Motivation and controlled practice are two vital tasks with these students.

   The 1 category pupils appear to have a variety of learning problems. A direct attack on writing skills may be ill-advised until concentrated attention is paid to thinking problems. If children think in a disconnected, illogical fashion, their writing will inevitably be the same way. It is imperative to approach the basic problem first, otherwise pupil and teacher frustrations are sure to occur.

ELEMENTARY STRENGTHS

1. Students demonstrated high competency in the use of dialogue and the necessary mechanical conventions to write dialogue well.
2. Students generally were capable of good ideas, but they frequently had difficulty developing the ideas into a good, sequential piece of writing.
3. Descriptions were good. Strong use of adjectives, adverbs and active verbs were noted.
4. Many went beyond broad generalizations and effectively used specifics.
5. A surprising number of students used a variety of sentence patterns. Those who attempted complex sentences understood the concept. Good use of introductory participial structures was noted.

ELEMENTARY WEAKNESSES

1. Paragraph development--both in form and unity. This was the number 1 problem last year also. Many children seem to have no concept of paragraphing.
2. Sentence structure--Many run-ons and fragments appear which indicate lack of understanding in the 1-2 groups of papers but which may be punctuation problems in the 3 and 4 categories of papers.
3. Misspelling of homonyms--This is a perpetual problem appearing among all categories of papers.
4. Syllabication--There was a general lack of understanding of how to divide words at the end of a line. Typical examples are a - nd, th - e.
5. Uses of the apostrophe--There was chronic misuse in possessives. Some children even used a "salt and pepper" effect. They wrote--then "sprinkled." Examples--see's, steal's
6. Titles--choice and capitalization. About half of the writers did not seem to know that any formal writing assignment must carry a title. Many of those who did, did not have proper capitalization skills.
7. Capitalization of the pronoun I.

   Nearly all of these weaknesses appeared last year also, and probably are "like the poor--they're with us always." Do let's address ourselves to these, however, and try to help children improve in these areas.

   By the end of grade 6, students should be able to write a paragraph, developing all sentences in a paragraph around a main idea, and developing the sentences in a logical sequence. They should begin new paragraphs for each main idea and for each speaker in a conversation, identing when necessary. Teachers in grades 3-6 should be made aware of the problems cited, for these are not merely sixth grade problem areas. Consistent standards must be expected by all teachers if children develop good writing habits.

JUNIOR HIGH STRENGTHS

1. Approaches were generally realistic and concrete. Many displayed mature attitudes toward the subject and in planning their paper.
2. Many went beyond the picture and instructions, writing good narrative and description which moved in a sequential fashion.
3. There was greater sophistication than the sixth grade papers with good use of analogy, metaphor, farce, and demonstrating a really remarkable awareness of current events, applying this in clever ways.
4. Generally the 2-4 categories demonstrated a considerable growth in vocabulary even though spelling was generally poor.
5. Many showed evidence of having written a rough draft and having done considerable editing.

JUNIOR HIGH WEAKNESSES

1. There was general lack of mechanical conventions necessary for accurate communication of ideas. The good ideas and sophisticated techniques suffered

because of inability to communicate them effectively. This means that much practice and evaluation according to precise criteria are essential. Much skill instruction must occur, also.

2. Far too many students are still making the same mistakes as the sixth graders, i.e., lack of capitalization of the pronoun I; misspelling homonyms such as they're/their/there; misusing apostrophes; run-ons and fragments for sentences. At grade 9, most students appeared to understand the sentence concept but are not punctuating correctly.
3. Good dialogue skills of 6th graders, generally have been lost.
4. SPELLING--The general reaction of the raters was "frightful!" Sixth graders do better and their spelling is not good.
5. A number, large enough to be noticeable, wrote begrudgingly because they were told to do so and told the reader just that, "Here, I hope you're satisfied." Or "You asked for it. Here it is."

STEP 5

The central staff assumed the responsibility for summarizing strengths and weaknesses at both levels. This information was important for all of us in our efforts to strengthen the program.

The entire process that evolved and the information acquired were extremely valuable to the Jefferson County Schools. First, we really did learn how 13,000 children were using the written communication skills they were learning. Too, teachers became more knowledgeable about the components of effective writing. The criteria became both a teaching and learning tool for adults and children, and many schools used the information to restructure procedures for skill instruction. The central staff acquired a basis for making additional decisions about program needs. Most important, awarenesses were developed about setting goals, upgrading expectations, and providing numerous writing experiences.

We are glad we started the project and expect to expand it to three grades in 1974. The Jefferson County School Board, the Program Auditing Department, the Division of Instruction and the constituents all feel that we now have a valid assessment tool for the written communication area of the language arts.

Grade 6
#1

Its an old lady in a super market looking at the tomatoes. Then she looked around to see if anyone was wacking her. Like she was going to take them. Then she stuck them in her per's. but as she was going out the door the super visor stoped her. And sed may I check your per's and the lady sed of corse not. then she walked out. then the super visor went to the ofice and kald the police. and they picked her up and toke her the the police statshen. and found here gilty.

Grade 6
#2

Hi-I'm Marty, a tomato. here are my two friends: Lucy and Mac. We have been in this package for ages but at least we aren't at the bottom of the pile any more. People pick us up and press on us and it feels like your skin is coming off of your body. My friends Ruth, Cindy and Tom were smashed, sad but true. A lady picked them up then droped the package on the floor and ran over it with her cart. It looked like tomato paste all over the floor. We always see that lady here, in fact here she comes now and she's picking us up, she's tilting us like she is going to drop us, help she did we are smashed all over the floor like tomato paste.

Grade 9
#1

The old lady looks like she
is squeing the ~~t~~ tomatoes.
Now about the eyes, I think
that their is a store cop
waching her and she dosen't
likes the store cop
waching her so she
said to her slelf so
you don't trust me
well just for that
I wont by your dumb
tomatoes.

Grade 9
#2

Loneliness is terrifying to some people, especially for those who live alone. Old people live with this loneliness almost all the time. Gertrude Pittle is one of these people, she goes all around town just to be with people.

Right now she's in the market shopping for her food. As she walks down the aisle, you can tell she is quite elderly. She hunches slightly and her enclosed shoulders shows an enclosed life. Gertrude's face is wrinkled but shows a kindness not known to most people. On her pointed nose rest wire-rimmed glasses, on top of her gray-white hair sits a "fancy" velvet hat. Her mouth is drawn up into a pucker position, and around her small neck are fake pearls.

"One of these days, I'm going to have to get a helper to bring my groceries to my house." she mumbles to herself. Taking a package of tomatoes, she looked around with her squinted eyes, and seeing a young store helper, through the tomatoes to the ground. The young store-hand rushed over and asked what happened. Mrs. Pittle replied, "I'm get-

Grade 9

ting so old, it's hard for me to carry things."

"I bet it is," said the market helper, "here, let me take those things for you." One arm at her elbow, and one arm pushing the cart, the store hand helped her along. "Is there anything else I can do for you?" he asked. A smile broadened on her lips and a tear came out of her eye.

USING JOURNALS WITH "SLOW" HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

Gail Fisher Briscoe, Tempe High School

Keeping a journal seems to help build writing confidence and skill with slow (or otherwise handicapped) learners. Not only does writing confidence improve, but there is an increased understanding and communication between student and teacher. I believe that good writing takes place when there is a real need to say something to an identified audience. Journals provide an opportunity for realistic written communication: a writer who has something to say to a real and identified audience, who is in this case the teacher. And of course this means that the teacher should write back to the student.

Journal writing can provide daily (or almost daily) writing practice. If you believe that daily practice helps to improve writing ability, then journals can satisfy that need. I have found journals to be advantageous in motivating slower students to write without fear and promoting self-confidence which is so often lacking in this type of student.

How to Start Using Journals in the Classroom

The first day of class I tell my students that they will be keeping a journal for the course and I ask them to purchase a spiral ring notebook for that purpose. I insist on the spiral ring type of notebook because that way the pages won't fall out. I ask that the notebook be 8½ x 11, but if they bring in something smaller (which many of them do) I accept that. In some cases I'm lucky if they bring in anything at all.

Journal grades are based on whether or not the student writes. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc., will not be marked or graded (though it will not go unnoticed). The idea is for the student to write freely and emphasize the expression of ideas. I also stress that the journal is a private matter between me and the student. What they write to me and what I write back to them will be seen by no one else. Specifically, this means that no parents, counselors, other teachers, or students, etc. will see it without the student's permission. To insure this privacy, the journals are kept in my classroom in a special cupboard. This same cupboard is used to store other materials and workbooks that the students use in class. Due to the nature of my students, I find that if I don't keep their materials for them many of them would never bring them to class.

How Often to Write

I don't believe in over-doing a good thing, so I find using the journals three days out of five is about right for my students and right for me (although there are students who write every day, and of course I encourage them to do so). I like to have them write at the beginning of the period the first three days of the week. This allows me time to read their journals on Thursday and Friday. It takes considerable time to read their entries and write back to them on an individual basis. Since I encourage students to ask me questions in their journals, by Thursday many of them are already "checking" to see if I have written back to them.

What to Write About

Because of some research I did several years ago, I feel that it's important to suggest to the student a topic to write about. According to several hundred college freshmen whom I questioned as to what they thought was the most difficult part of writing, "finding the topic" and having something to say about it was the hardest part of composition for them. Remembering this when I started to teach slow high school freshmen helped me decide that I would pay careful attention to their writing topics. After all, if college freshmen found the topic to be so difficult, certainly slow high school students would probably experience the same.

For example, on Mondays we've agreed to write about what happened over the weekend or anything else that occurs to them. I am interested in their lives and here is a chance for the student to relate to a teacher what he does outside of school. How many other classes provide that kind of an opportunity? The following is a Monday morning entry that reflects a weekend and much more:

> I will write about How i Think the world stinks! The People in it stink and it's all 1 Big Mess All People care about is Themselves, RUSH, RUSH, RUSH HURRY up so I can do something for MYSELF thats all They Think aBout gime your pencil, gimme some paper Let my copy your WORK! and all kinds of other crap and when you don't perform quite up to par they cut you down because of it. and then there are the Millionaires who make their money by giving somebody the "Shaft" I don't know How you Feel about Todays "Modern Society" But IF i had My way I'd either not be around at all or someplace out of peoples Reach, even the people who have guts enough to say I'll stick it out I'll try to change the world they either end up missing some dark and stormy night or they run short of funds and can't do anymore.

The thoughts of this student are more mature than "average" student in my classes, but the mode of expression is about par. The important thing to me is that the student has something significant to say.

Journal entries for the other days that we write can be drawn from topics that I write on the blackboard. These suggested topics usually correlate with stories that we will read in class, films that we will see, discussions that will take place later in the class, current events around the school, city, nation, state, etc. For example, before viewing the film "Generations" I asked the students to write about the generation gap between old and young people. This is essentially what the film is about. One student who hadn't been writing very much in his journal started off this way:

> you fliney found a subject the I like because of the generation gabe between me and my parents the worst thing about it my sister moved away from home and she the aleny one that understood my problens and I could talck ta her and my mom and dad do nat under stand they they are so much better then me they dont think I can do inthing at all. . .

This student then proceeded to fill two pages in his journal whereas before he was only writing three or four lines on one of his good days. He also had a lot to say after we watched the film.

Students are free to choose whether or not they want to write on the suggested topic. However, the majority seem to choose the given topic and then there are some that do both the suggested topic and an original topic of their own. What students write about varies greatly: school life, teachers, class, family life and its joys and problems, boyfriends and girlfriends, grades, sports, hobbies, holidays, vacations, etc. I once had a student who made up her own topic every day and filled one page in her journal. Some of her topics were: Stick Matches, Places I Have Gone, Snakes, Girls' P.E., Our Peach Tree, Ladybugs, Muscular Dystrophy, Feelings, Sunday, Trash Cans, Rain, Cave People, and many more imaginative subjects. Her journal was a delight to read. Often she would ask me how I felt about some of the ideas she was expressing.

Unfortunately not all students have interesting entries, nor does the journal appeal to everyone. For example:

> Monday: Today is a rotten day because last friday some body stole my carberator.
> Tuesday: Today I will write about nothing. Because there is nothing to write about.
> Wednesday: Today I will write about nothing. Because there is nothing to write about.

Journals are not a panacea for everyone at all times.

Individualizing the Journals

The journals really become individualized when I receive in them diagrams of football plays, detailed drawings of model airplanes, photographs of pets and relatives, candy and gum taped to the pages, nickles for me to buy my morning cup of coffee, hand and thumb prints, free-hand drawings of myself or other members of the class, etc. I had one student who decided to give her journal a name. "Journal I'm going to give you a name alright your name will be Crissy." All entries were then addressed to "Crissy" with separate entries addressed to me even though she understood I was reading everything.

Vacations from the Journals

Every six weeks or so I find it necessary to take a "vacation" from the journals. I need a break to catch up on other things going on in my classes. Usually the students enjoy this vacation too, but not always.

> Hello Journal I haven't Written in you in a week because the teacher didn't want us to. But Journal I really like writing to you. Because I can always tell the truth to you.

So now when we put the "journals on vacation," if there are still students who want to continue writing, I let them do so and tell them to hand in their journals when they are ready for me to read them. Some have done this on a daily basis.

Increased Communication Between Student and Teacher

Journals provide a means whereby the student and teacher grow closer through written communication. As implied before, the journal is a structured setting that allows sincere communication to take place between student and teacher. As one student sincerely but ineptly put it, "This is really read because I find my sealf rideing to you. I wonder why."

At times I feel like a "Dear Abby" when students ask for advice about their personal problems with parents, teachers, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc. At times these problems are so urgent that they demand an immediate answer. Several times I have been asked at the beginning of a class to read a journal and write back to the student before that class ends!

I have also noticed some students "sharing" my advice with other students by allowing them to read their journals. I think they also allow each other to read their journals just to see if I say the same thing to everyone. I try very hard to see that everyone has different comments from me. When I start running out of things to say, then I start asking them questions. This is also a way to start some of them writing when they have nothing to say; they can answer my questions.

There is also something unique about how some of the students enjoy rereading their journals. This seems to happen most often when we haven't written for a while. I guess it's like getting reacquainted with an old friend. I once observed a student who did nothing but reread her journal for an entire class period. Unlike other composition situations, students do not usually throw away their journals when we are done with them. I hope that's a reflection of the time, interest, and sincerity that's invested in them.

Journals Used to Solve Discipline Problems

I have also found the journals to be a good place to work out discipline problems. In addition to talking about the problem with the student, I will write to him about it in his journal. Several times the students have gone into detail as to why they acted the way they did in class. The journal communication was more detailed than the verbal explanation. Sometimes I even get apologies; "am sorey fore the hard time I guve you. . ."

In Conclusion

Journals provide a valid writing situation for the slow learner. Moreover, the consistent feedback that is usually needed by this type of student can be satisfied through the journal. As a consequence of journal writing, in other situations the student seems more confident and willing to work out the imperfections in his writing. The journal creates a unique, personal communication experience between the student and the teacher.

COMPOSITION CRITERIA

Hal Fortner, Central High School, Phoenix

Carl Sandburg once said, "The inexplicable is all around us. So is the incomprehensible. So is the unintelligible." And, one might add, so are criteria for evaluating a composition. With the vast abstractions and subjectivity associated with writing, teachers and students have repeatedly met the problem of evaluating a piece of writing with similar frustrations. What, we continue to ask, are some of the most important components in a composition--for the student as he writes and the teacher as he evaluates student writing? The composition criteria listed at the end of this article is an effort to stabilize the frustrations and establish order for student and teacher. And the list has been enthusiastically received by the students in my senior composition classes. They tell me it is very helpful to them in two ways. First, it aids them as a check sheet as they put a composition together. Second, the point system on the sheet, which I use in evaluating each paper, identifies a writing problem specifically for the student. The list of criteria helps me by reducing the number of notes I need to write on student papers, improving communication with the student about his paper. Assuredly, the students refer to the criteria frequently.

Here is how the criteria evolved. During the 1972-73 school year, all English Departments in the Phoenix Union High School System were required to make a product evaluation of all selective English courses. Writing courses could not be evaluated without a satisfactory criteria. Even so, we had no criteria by which a piece of student writing could be judged. This remained unanswered as we collected pre and post writing samples from all students in all writing classes across the district during the second semester. From these writing samples, approximately seven hundred and fifty papers were selected by District Research and Planning for readers to evaluate to complete the research design.

By spring, time had come to bite the bullet. To complete our work we had to develop criteria for evaluating student writing. Martha Davis, District Communication Arts Supervisor, Coleen Goodwin of District Research and Planning and an English teacher, Tom Reid, of East High School, and I got together and worked out the criteria at the end of this article. Then Tom and I used it during the summer as we read approximately 376 papers each as part of the product evaluation process. Using the point system, we listed ten numbers on each piece of writing and totaled them. The total could range from zero to fifty-two and was, in effect, the worth of the paper.

In developing the composition criteria we had to decide what we thought was the most important thing in a composition and give it the highest number of points. Communication of ideas--fulfillment of the purpose--won out and received a range of zero to nine points. The more important items are near the top of the list; less important items are in the last half of the list and receive fewer points. Perhaps more discussion and disagreement arose over Originality than any other item on the list, possibly because it may be more subjective than other components. Originality remained second, however, as a challenge to the student and was given a range of zero to seven points.

The practical application of an instrument such as this is the test of its worth, and its full practicality cannot be determined without student feedback. Last summer as I read almost four hundred samples of student writings, carefully listing ten numbers on each paper and adding them, I became concerned about the lack of student rebuttal to the criteria list. How helpful, I kept wondering, would this list be to students? Should the list be improved. Could it be an effective way to communicate with the student about his writing? Would I really have the time, during a busy school year, to place ten numbers on each student's paper, total them, and assign a grade of 1, 2, etc.? These questions stayed with me, demanding an honest answer. By the time summer was over, I had decided I had to find out. It was like paying a debt to society.

Finding out has been rewarding to the students in my senior composition class and to me. Almost all of the student feedback has been positive. A few students were a little astonished at the beginning to learn that they were being held responsible for something which they had not studied in composition class. They soon came to realize, however, that several of the components had been learned in bits and pieces in the past, and that in senior composition we were getting them all together. The only really negative student criticism has been about the high number of Originality points. "It is just your opinion," students say. So in response to student suggestions, I have lowered the points for Originality from seven points to four.

Here is how students and I use the composition criteria sheet. Each student keeps a copy of the sheet in his composition folder which is always left in the room. (Senior composition is a laboratory course; all word is done during the class with no outside work required.) As students prepare draft copies, they keep the criteria sheet nearby as a check list, attempting to incorporate the best of each component into the composition. When the final copy of the composition is completed and handed in, I read the paper and evaluate it based on the ten divisions, listing ten numbers in the margin on the first page of the composition. The total becomes the grade. For special emphasis, I sometimes circle one or two of the numbers. For example, under Sentence structure, a student may get three points indicating lack of variety. If it seems the student needs to give special attention to sentence variety, the number three would be circled. After all papers are read and marked, I work out a scale for the totals, translating them into 1, 2, 3, etc. At the first of the semester a 1 paper usually had a total number of points of 38, 39, or 40. Near the end of the semester, the number of points required to get a 1 is 46, 47 or better. The scale moves up with each assignment to emphasize that each writing experience should help one write better next time.

When the students get their papers back, they once again need the criteria list to interpret the numbers I have placed on the papers. They do this with considerable interest, first of all checking my math for simple errors, most assuredly.

I guard, rather jealously, some of the items on the list, saving them for only the very best writing from students. These items are: No structural problems--has pizzazz; Has topic sentence and outstanding support; and Excellent word choice. But I have used these a few times, I am pleased to say.

Items on the criteria list which seem the most helpful to students are: Organization--introduction, body, conclusion; Paragraph structure, and Sentence structure. These seem somewhat more concrete to students than Fulfillment of purpose or Word choice.

Admittedly, the criteria list may need revision. It may even be criticized as a futile or absurd effort, as just one more attempt to reduce the many abstractions of writing to the concrete. For those English teachers who believe all processes of writing and evaluation of writing are completely subjective, the criteria list will add to your frustrations, perhaps tamper with your sanity, even destroy your American dream. Yet, having used the list, I do believe that it has several strong points. It provides a check sheet for students as they write a composition. It improves communications between teacher and student, reducing the need for those long penciled notes in margins of papers. It identifies, somewhat specifically, a problem for the student. Finally, it gives the student and teacher a sense of direction, a yardstick of expectations, rescuing them from the "incomprehensible" and "unintelligible" as Sandburg put it.

COMPOSITION CRITERIA

		Points
1.	Communication of Ideas - Fulfillment of purpose	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2.	Originality	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	Organization (overall paper) topic statement intro./concl. body	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	Paragraphing (transitions, coherence, unity, sequence) (when applicable)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	Paragraph Structure (topic sentence, specific examples, unity within paragraphs) 6 - has topic sentence and outstanding support 5 - has topic sentence and appropriate support 4 - has topic sentence but lacks sufficient support 3 - no topic sentence 2 - minimal organization 1 - total lack of paragraph organization 0 - "a mess"	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
6.	Sentence Structure (frag., run-ons, comma fault, variety) 5 - no structural problems - has pizzazz 4 - no structural problems 3 - lacks variety 2 - some structural problems 1 - numerous structural errors 0 - gross errors	0 1 2 3 4 5
7.	Word Choice (pro. ref., images) 4 - excellent 3 - good 2 - fair 1 - poor	0 1 2 3 4
8.	Punctuation/Capitalization 3 - no/few errors 2 - some errors 1 - many errors 0 - "gross"	0 1 2 3
9.	Spelling 3 - no/few errors 2 - some errors 1 - many errors 0 - "gross"	0 1 2 3
10.	Legibility 2 - readable 1 - hard to read 0 - impossible to read	0 1 2

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATION THROUGH THE CLASS PROFILE

Jan A. Guffin, North Central High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

It is not uncommon for students to accuse teachers of reading capriciously what students have written. This claim usually includes the suspicion that the teacher has evaluated the written work on the basis of how well the student performs in an oral situation, how neatly he has prepared his paper, or how he affects the teacher's personality in any number of other ways. Often, such claims are true. Any teacher knows that often those students who talk best do write best; and any teacher also knows the impossibility of disregarding the hundreds of subtle prejudices which for some reason matter greatly to him.

Many strategies have been developed for "objectifying" our grading procedures--individual conferences, small-group conferences, self-grading, or peer grading of students' papers--but one which pertains most effectively to written work is the use of profile. "Profile" itself may have too clinical a sound for some teachers, implying a cumulative record of a given student's performance or a longitudinal record of his progress. To some extent, these meanings apply in the present context; however, here, the word means first a "collective" reading of the responses from an entire class, and secondly, an individual evaluation. As both an expedient for the teacher and as a means of clarification for the student, the profile may serve to indicate the scope of responses on a particular issue; to indicate multiple points of view in a single writing assignment; or to provide a comparative reading of responses on an essay examination.

In its simplest form, the profile is a valuable way for the teacher to determine the range of feeling among the class on a given topic. When a particularly interesting or controversial topic is raised, the inventive teacher may take advantage of this high interest by asking all students to respond in writing before or after they discuss the topic orally. Depending on the dynamics of the class, the students will be more or less affected by what their peers say in a discussion. The teacher must trust his own judgment concerning the make-up of the class and the nature of the topic under discussion to determine just when it is best to have the students respond in writing. At either time, he should stress that this writing is non-evaluative; that it will be read for information only, with no grade attached.

When the students have written for a few minutes, the teacher should collect the papers. After class, he may skim them quickly, recording on a ditto master the variety of attitudes expressed by his students. Such compilation takes less time than it might at first seem, since the teacher is reading quickly, looking for variations in feeling rather than precision of expression. Also, this is a taks which can be accomplished by a student or teacher aid or an able office helper.

When the range of responses is recorded, the teacher can return his findings to the class in duplicated form, and ask for a reconsideration of the topic in relation to the previous discussion. Frequently in an animated class discussion, a small nucleus of students will either consciously or unconsciously manipulate the exchange of ideas merely through their self-assertiveness. What often happens with the profile is that new ideas are expressed by those students who are reluctant to speak up in class. Thus it can throw new light on what may appear to be a "closed case."

A second valuable use of the profile may be to reveal multiple points of view or writing techniques among a class when many, if not all, of the students have written on the same subject. This is especially helpful when the students are given a problem-solving topic on which to write (which of the eleven passengers on the sinking ship will you allow to enter the lifeboat which will contain only four members? for example); or when they are given the same topic but much latitude in terms of the technique they use for approaching the subject. In this case, as in determing the scope of feeling among the class, the teacher reads the papers with an eye for their differences. He need feel no necessity for reproducing all the papers for the class to read, but is likely to find that the class will respond enthusiastically to seeing the most common, the most extraordinary, even the most illogical approach or technique.

Often when the students are given complete freedom in handling a given topic, they will choose either that approach which is their favorite or that which they perform best. Thus, the teacher may find poems, personal narratives, dialogues, short stories, or straight exposition in one writing assignment. When a sample of each approach is presented to the class for consideration, the teacher finds himself in a position of being able to teach a number of critical reading skills without necessarily labeling them as such. For invariably, the discussions of the student samples will reach the stage of value judgment, which will necessitate a fairly close reading. Such questions as "Why do you think the poem succeeds better with this topic than the personal narrative?" or "Why do you think this subject is best not treated in an imaginative manner?" almost always lead to re-readings and defensible explanations on the parts of the students. They may not change their minds, either about the quality of another student's paper or about the grade the teacher has assigned to their own, but more often than not, the exposure through discussion to other ways of thinking proves enlightening to most of the class.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the profile may be helpful for providing a comparative reading of student responses to an essay question. The preparation of the profile in this instance requires more time than in the previous situations, but in the long run does not require significantly more time than the teacher would ordinarily give to the reading of a set of essay questions, and almost always proves worthwhile for both the teacher and the students. Lawrence Blondino has used nearly the same approach with success in the teaching of literature by offering his students what he calls "the class answer," to make them more aware of the range of responses and potential for analysis (Lawrence Blondino, "The 'Class Answer' as a Teaching Device," ENGLISH JOURNAL, 1968, pp. 1032-35.), but it seems even more essential in a writing class, or in any class where some uniform testing through writing takes place.

To use the profile for evaluating essay exams, the teacher gives a set of papers several readings, instead of a single careful one. His first reading is merely to determine again the range of responses, but this time he deliberately tries to place each paper in one of three stacks, which represent the categories of high, middle, and low range responses. A "high" paper will be one which directly addresses the question, remains clearly in focus throughout, provides ample detail to support its main points, and is relatively clean in terms of its mechanics. The "middle" paper will be one which attempts to do the same thing but does so with less expertise; in other words, this paper may delay in addressing the question, it may be uncertain in its focus in one or more areas, or it may provide insufficient detail to support one or more main points. The "low" paper obviously will be that which evades the question, provides faulty information, or is for any other reason, logically unacceptable.

In this first reading, the teacher may find one or more papers which simply do not fit into one of the three categories. Rather than ponder over such papers, he should create a fourth, or "maverick" pile, which means that those papers eventually will require special consideration.

Although the student responses will vary with the ability of the class or the difficulty of the question, the teacher will generally find after this first reading that he has a larger number of papers in his "middle-range stack" than in either of the other two. His second reading then, is to refine his initial judgment, separating those papers from the first stack which are "most" high, those from the third stack which are "most" low, and those from the middle stack which tend toward one extreme or the other.

When he is satisfied that his range is fairly accurate, he may wish to give the papers a third reading for the purpose of recording comments on individual papers. He will find out that by the third reading, his comments will come readily and probably will still not require the kind of "close" reading he customarily gives when he reads a set of papers only once, for he has read each paper comparatively and is more conscious of the strengths or weaknesses of any one response than when he reads the set paper by paper and forces himself to "guess" whether the remaining papers will be stronger or weaker.

When the reading is finished, he can prepare duplicated samples for the students to read in class before he returns their tests. This is most simply done by choosing about five or six responses representing different performance levels; arranging them in random order; then identifying them by number instead of by name on the ditto sheet.

To put the profile to its best use in this instance, the teacher will distribute the ditto samples at the beginning of a class period, ask the students to study them silently for ten or fifteen minutes, and then rank the samples from high to low. The easiest way for them to do this is merely to rearrange the numbers in the margin of the ditto sheet. At this point, he must also that the students not share their rankings with others to insure an honest reaction to the papers in question.

When the students have finished ranking the papers, the teacher should call for a rapid-fire recitation of the results. He should simply instruct each student to announce the new high-to-low order of the responses according to his evaluation. A typical recitation might begin:

High-------------Low
First Student: #3, #1, #5, #4, #2
Second Student: #3, #1, #4, #5, #2
Third Student: #3, #1, #5, #2, #4

And so on, all around the room. The teacher may wish to make the situation more official by having a student record the responses as they are called out, although practically, this is seldom necessary, as a consensus usually emerges through the recitation. When this procedure is completed, the teacher may ask the class what responses appeared to be given consistently high rankings, which were given consistently low rankings, etc. Then he may ask for a defense of such rankings.

As the class proceeds to defend their rankings, many of the same points which entered the teacher's mind as he read the papers will appear in discussion. Sometimes, new points will be revealed, and the teacher may realize an oversight in his own assessment of the papers. He may even be convinced that he should make an adjustment in a grade he has given an individual paper. At other times, a student may merely wish to defend his own paper, which he can do anonymously, since no names appear on the duplicated samples.

At the conclusion of the discussion, when the teacher returns the original test papers, the student will not only feel more capable of looking at his own paper more objectively, having already seen the range of responses among the class, but also will usually agree that his paper does in fact merit the grade which the teacher has given it. Evaluation under these conditions becomes less a matter of confrontation than of negotiation, and ultimately both the student and the teacher leaves the test with equitable feelings. Moreover, the class has had a chance to review the test without laboriously repeating correct answers, they have been given the opportunity to express their thinking individually and as a group, and the teacher has given himself the chance to perfect his own talent in evaluating such writing as responsibly as possible.

Whether the profile is used to enable the class to explore the full range of feelings on a topic of great interest; to examine other points of view or approaches to a writing assignment; or to evaluate individual and class responses to an essay question, it will prove to be a useful vehicle toward better classroom communication and evaluation. The discussion it provides may be lengthy, uncomfortable, tedious, or exciting--but it will never be capricious.

COMPASSIONATE GRADING: POSSIBLE?

Josephine Kehoe, Jefferson High School, Edgerton Park, Rochester, New York

At the opening session of last May's New York State English Council Conference, in Saratoga Springs, Robert Hogan, Executive Secretary of NCTE, told a story about a second grade boy. It seems that his family had to move to a new state because of his father's job and the little boy changed environments reluctantly.

On his first day in the new school he attended, his language teacher told the class to draw a picture of how they felt and then write about the picture. What a good, creative teacher!

The little boy thought for a while and then drew a tombstone and inscribed on it, "I wish I was dead!" The teacher collected the drawings and writings and returned the "corrected" version the next day. On the tombstone inscription the word "was" had been crossed out and in its place the teacher had written "were."

When Mr. Hogan finished the story, his audience reacted in shocked awareness. You could almost see everyone in the room remembering Mr. Barringer in UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE correcting Alice's love letter and then remembering when, as an English teacher, he too did an equally cruel job of correcting a student's written work.

The area of written composition is an enormously complex one, and one with which I have been struggling for years both as a teacher and a department chairman. So, given the task of conducting a research study, I decided I'd work on some aspect of written composition of high school students.

As a result of reading the literature in this area, I found out that controlled research studies show that among the factors that affect essay grades are: sex, handwriting, choice of topic and mode, and the number of critical comments a teacher writes on the student's essay.

In addition to these concerns the student's grade is also affected by the order in which the teacher reads the set of papers--the first papers graded receive higher grades--and the method the teacher uses to grade the papers, i.e., does he give it an "overall" grade, does he analyze it on a set of criteria, or does he feed it into a computer? For example, suppose that Bob, a fifteen-year old male high school student, is assigned to write an essay in the argumentative mode on a topic relating to society. He writes his essay in his usual poor handwriting and makes a number of spelling and punctuation errors, peppers his essay with "I think," and "in my opinion," and uses many qualifiers making his argument vague. Let us further suppose that the teacher who gave the assignment to Bob's class had given the same assignment to two of her other classes and was left with ninety papers to grade. She began grading papers on Monday but needed Tuesday and Wednesday to complete her task. Bob's paper was one of the last to be graded. Bob's teacher writes very neatly and is conscientious about noting every error for her students. In fact she prides herself on her editorial sense and writes detailed, critical marginal notes to her students.

Bob receives his graded essay on Thursday and is not surprised to see his usual D.

Like the second grade boy who Mr. Hogan told us about, Bob also seems to be a victim of uncompassionate grading. My goal, therefore, became to try to shed some light on those factors which might improve student's essay grades. That is, are there some things I could do to help students achieve better grades on their written work and also enable me to work with the teachers in my department to develop a more consistent method for grading student essays than currently existed?

As I saw it, there were two major problems to be solved. First, could a reliable scale be found for rating compositions, and second, could student writing be improved by concentrating on the student's verb choice?

To help answer the first question, three hundred and twenty-four essays written by eleventh-grade students in Monroe County schools were used to provide data. (These essays were collected by Dr. Thomas R. Knapp, Professor of Education at the University of Rochester, and Dr. Henry B. Slotnick, Assistant to the Director of Research and Analysis, National Assessment of Education Progress.) Students were randomly assigned one of nine essay topics. (See Table 1 for the specific writing assignments.) They wrote their essays under typical essay-writing conditions, i.e., teachers were asked to handle the writing task as an ordinary assignment of their own. The nine sets of essays were examined by nine teachers from City of Rochester high schools. Although all nine teachers were or had been employed by Rochester City School district, their experience was varied. For example, one had taught for three years in a Monroe County suburban school before teaching twelve additional years in a city school; one had taught for five years in a boys' technical school; one had taught at community colleges in Monroe County and in California, one is a Ph. D. candidate in English at the University of Rochester, presently teaching his ninth year in city schools, and three have had all their experience at Jefferson High School.

Each rater was supplied with one set of four sample essays and two randomly assigned sets from the nine sets of essays collected from the eleventh grade students. The nine sets of essays contained between 33 and 39 papers per set so that each rater worked with approximately 70 essays. Each essay was rated by two different raters. All essays were evaluated for purpose, organization, content, diction, sentences, and grammar and mechanics. Each of these characteristics was rated from 1 (low) to 5 (high), and a total score for each essay was determined (possible scores ranged from 6 to 30). (See Table 2 for a sample of the rating sheet. This rating sheet was given to a group of 25 English teachers attending an EPDA Institute in Applied Linguistics during the summer of 1969 by Dr. Philip Gerber, then Chairman of the English Department at the State University College at Brockport.)

Table 1
The Essay Questions

1. topic: self; mode of discourse: narrative

   Think of a critical event in your life--an incident or situation that had an important effect on you. It could be something that happened yesterday, or when you were five years old. It could have happened someplace exciting--or at home while you were eating dinner. It might have made you happy or sad--or it might have taught you an important lesson. Write an essay telling about this event in such a way that its importance is made clear.
2. topic: self; mode of discourse: descriptive

   You are many different people. There is the you that goes to school; the you with your friends after school; the you doing the thing you enjoy most. . .Which of those is the real you? Decide on the situation or activity in which you are most yourself: "I am a dreamer," "I am a ball player," "I am a dancer," and write about how you look and feel at that moment.

3. topic: self; mode of discourse: argumentative
   In the past ten years, you've probably thought a lot about parents--what they did right, what they might have done better. In another ten years, maybe, you'll be a parent yourself. Taking as your topic, "If I had a son" or "If I had a daughter", explain what you would hope to do for your child. Be sure to tell why you would do it.
4. topic: school; mode of discourse: narrative
   Write about something that happened at school that made you feel good or made you unhappy. You may choose anything to write about: teachers, school itself, or the whole idea of learning. Be sure to tell what happened.
5. topic: school; mode of discourse: descriptive
   Describe some place or object in your school about which you have a special feeling. It might be a cluttered locker (your own or a friend's), the gymnasium, or your favorite classroom. Whatever it is, describe its look, feel, smell, and sound as best you can.
5. topic: school; mode of discourse: argumentative
   Some people think that schools should be open all year long. If the schools were, students and teachers would be able to choose when they wished to have their vacations--in the summer, as usual, or in the fall, winter, or spring. Decide how you feel about school all year 'round. Then write down your feelings, making sure to tell why you feel the way you do.
7. topic: society: mode of discourse: narrative
   Many important events have occurred in your lifetime--the moon landings, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and the earthquake in Los Angeles are examples. Pick any important event and write about it for someone who had never heard about it before.
8. topic: society; mode of discourse: descriptive
   Everyone has a different idea of what the word "American" means. Write about an event or scene which you feel in typically and really American. You may choose anything you would like: a football game, a hamburger, a television show--anything you'd like. Write about it so that someone who does not live in America would know all about it.
9. topic: society; mode of discourse: argumentative
   Imagine that a large company near you has been found to be seriously polluting a local river. Some people have been talking about closing the company down until something can be done about the pollution. If the company is closed down, many people will be out of work. Write your feelings about whether to shut down the company. Be sure to indicate why you feel the way you do.

Table 2
The Rating Sheet

Theme # ________________ Evaluator _____________

EVALUATION SCALE: COMPOSITION

PURPOSE:	Does it meet the assignment? Is it clear? Suitably narrowed? Is it unified throughout? Does it show originality of thought? (high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)	________
ORGANIZATION:	Appropriate to purpose? Is movement clear? Logical? Are smooth transitions employed? 5 4 3 2 1	________
CONTENT:	Is it sufficient? Thin? Well balanced? Is it accurate? Concrete? Unified relative to purpose? Appropriate? Original? 5 4 3 2 1	________

DICTION: Clear and accurate use of words? Vivid? Appropriate? Precise? Original?
5 4 3 2 1 ________
SENTENCES: Are they of acceptable completeness? Variety?
5 4 3 2 1 ________
GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS: Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage of acceptable grammatical forms, etc.
5 4 3 2 1 ________
TOTAL SCORE ________

When the grading was completed, statistical procedures showed that the rating scale had an extremely high reliability coefficient (187). This meant that the nine raters were in close agreement with each other on how they would rate essays using this particular instrument.

Armed with this reliable instrument, the next step was to determine whether or not students could count on higher composition grades by using what English teachers call strong verbs.

For a working definition of weak and strong verbs, Ken Macrorie's definitions formed the base. Macrorie, in TELLING WRITING suggests in his chapter "Sharpening," the one way student essays could be improved is by working with the verbs that students use. He advocates the elimination of excessive use of weak verbs (all forms of the verb "to be", plus make, have, go, move, get, come) and the incorporation of strong verbs (verbs imparting a more specific and particular meaning such as, "construct," "build," "glue," as substitutes for the weak "make"). He also advocates the use of active verb forms.

> In years of experience with editors and other readers who criticize his writing, a professional comes to identify some of the common weakness in all writing, and he looks for them when he sits down to improve his first or second draft of a piece of writing: (p.189)
>
> He looks for the excessive use of the verb is (and all forms of to be) . . .and passive verbs. (p. 189)
>
> A helpful strategy in replacing is in a sentence consists of finding another verb which carries more meaning and allows you to drop a number of unnecessary words. (p. 191)
>
> Dullness may be imparted to sentences by excessive use of make, have, go, move, get, and come. They are not full of specific meaning. (p. 194)

In short, therefore, weak and strong verb forms were defined as follows:

WEAK VERB FORMS

1. All forms of the verb "to be".
2. Macrorie-defined additions (make, go, have, move, get, come, and all of their derivatives).
3. Passive verb forms, for example, "The baseball was hit by me." The verb form "was hit" is considered a weak verb form because it is passive in nature.

STRONG VERB FORMS

All verb forms not classified as weak.

With these definitions in mind, a sample from the original 324 essays were modified by high school juniors and seniors. First, the verbs in each essay were counted. Then the number of weak verbs was determined, and a proportion of weak to total verbs was calculated. Essays were classified as follows:

1. Those essays with approximately a 1:3 proportion of weak verbs to total verbs were called "originally strong" essays.

2. Those with a 2:3 proportion of weak verbs to total verbs were called "originally weak" essays.
3. Those with a 1:2 proportion of weak verbs to total verbs were called "originally average" essays.

Students then worked individually and in groups of two or three to weaken the verbs in the originally strong essays, strengthen the verbs in the originally weak essay, and both strengthen and weaken the verbs in the originally average essay.

From February 1973 until April 1973 a class of eleventh and twelfth grade students in a creative writing class at John Marshall High School in Rochester, New York, worked on the essays.

On the first day, the goals of the study were explained and help from the students was enlisted on a voluntary basis. Students would receive 20 points for each essay they revised and could in that way earn a grade for their work. In order to reward students for their work, bonus points were frequently offered. Students were also rewarded with candy bars and cookies. These rewards were administered randomly, i.e., some days became "bonus days," some "candy days," and some just plain "work days." A regular pattern for reward was avoided.

Students were given instructions for revising essays both verbally and via a dittoed set of instructions. (See Table 3). Every student was first given a copy of the same essay to revise and, upon completion, a discussion concerning their verb choices was held.

Table 3

Instructions for Essay Revisions

1. Check your packet to see if you have three, double spaced copies and one Xerox copy of your essay.
2. Copy the three digit code number from the Xerox copy to the other copies.
3. Use pencil for all revisions!
4. Correct the first copy for spelling. Also change all incorrect forms of: to, too, their, they're, there, your, you're, its, it's. IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE ASK ME.
5. If the Xerox copy has the letters OW on it that means you are working with an "originally weak" essay and you have to strengthen the essay.
    a. Change all forms of the circled verbs (weak) to strong verbs.
    b. All forms of "to be" (is, am, was, were, will, shall) to strong verbs. Substitute if possible.
    c. Change passive forms to active forms. Using the following pattern:
        PASSIVE: The object that was stepped on by me was a ladybug with lavender spots.
        ACTIVE: I stepped on a ladybug with lavender spots.
6. If the Xerox copy has the letters OS on it that means you are working with an "originally strong" essay and you have to weaken the essay.
    a. Change all forms of underlined verbs (strong) to weak verbs (all forms of "to be" plus, make, have, move, get, come, go).
    b. Change active forms to passive forms. Reverse the pattern in "c" above.
7. If the Xerox copy has the letters OA on it that means you are working with an "originally average" essay and you have to both weaken AND strengthen the essay. This time you do two separate essays.
8. Use scrap paper until you make a decision and then make corrections on the double spaced copy. When you finish turn the copies into me for coding.
9. On the chart, indicate your name and the number of the essay you are working on. When you hand in the completed revision(s), I will initial the chart and indicate the number of points you earned.

While weakening and/or strengthening verbs, every attempt was made to make as few other changes as possible. However, other slight changes were necessary. It was not always possible, for example, to simply substitute a weak verb for a strong one and still maintain the word pattern in a sentence since a progression from a weak to a strong verb is often a progression from a passive to an active verb. Essays heavy in the use of "is" and "are" for main verbs rely upon the use of "there is" and "there are." These phrases were generally eliminated when strengthening the verbs in essays and were generally added when weakening the verbs.

In order to eliminate handwriting effects, the essays were typed. In order to eliminate spelling effects, the original essays were corrected for spelling. If this decision had not been made the student revisers would have to guess about mispellings for revised verb forms, and the possibilities for confusion and essay contamination seemed boundless. In addition to simple letter-combination spelling corrections, the correct forms of words such as their, there, they're, and your, you're were always insured. Other errors (grammatical, punctuation) remained as they appeared in the originally written essays.

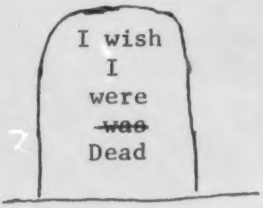
Using the rating scale, the seven new groups of essays on six topics were read and rated by a group of eighteen volunteer teachers from New York State. The reading took place at the New York State English Council Conference on Friday, May 11, 1973, in Saratoga Springs, New York. The readers were randomly assigned one set of about 25 papers to read and rate. Instructions were given to rate each paper independently, using the variables on the rating sheet as the only criteria. The readings were done in one session lasting about two hours. The eighteen teachers who rated the essays were selected at random from those who were in attendance at the conference and who expressed an interest in participating.

An analysis of the new data obtained from the rating scale, showed many interesting results. First of all, the rating sheets' reliability was less than in the original rating, leading one to the possible conclusion that perhaps the raters were not concerned with following the rating sheet so much as they were anxious to show how "they" grade essays. Even with this rater unreliability, however, a few positive conclusions about verb choices could be made.

When strengthened essays were rated higher than the original essays:

1. alterations from passive to active constructions had been made.
2. many "there is" and "there are" expressions had been eliminated.
3. there were few (if any) sentence structure changes. That is, the original essay did not contain confusing fragments or run on sentences.
4. most of the essays had been revised by three very apt students.

This information leads a teacher to agree with Ken Macrorie, i.e., strong verbs are really valued more highly than are weak verbs. So, if a student wishes to improve his composition grades, one way is to revise his work through verb choice. Another outgrowth of this research is the indication that teachers who work together and train themselves in the use of a rating scale, are apt to grade essays in a more fair way or at least in a more consistent way.

Certainly, at least, this appears a more compassionate approach than the  approach to grading student writing.

AN INFORMAL APPROACH TO TEACHING COMPOSITION: LOVE A FROG, HE MAY BE YOUR PRINCE

Sandy Baldwin and Sallee Clements, Arizona State University

After several often frustrating years of teaching composition, looking out at those impervious faces as we expounded on the merit of some hypothetical sentence or some beautifully organized professional essay, we came upon a small book titled UPTAUGHT by Ken Macrorie, a book we believe anyone who is or ever hopes to be an English teacher should read. In it he writes,

> The grade school student is told by his teacher that he must learn Engfish because the high school teacher will expect mastery of it. The high school student is told by his teacher that he must learn it because the college professor will expect mastery of it. The college undergraduate is told by his professor that he must learn it so he can go to graduate school and write his Ph.D. thesis in it.
>
> Almost no one reads Ph.D. theses.

Engfish is a term coined by one of Macrorie's students to describe "the bloated, pretentious language I saw everywhere around me, in the students' themes, in the textbooks on writing, in the professors and administrators' communications to each other. A feel-nothing, say-nothing language, dead like Latin, devoid of the rhythms of contemporary speech, a dialect in which words are almost never 'attached to things,' as Emerson said they should be."

It was just that sort of English we had been teaching, a genre we had mastered years previous. And it does reach a number of students: the extremely poor student is able to master some basic mechanics if you hammer at him long enough; the above average student learns to polish his Engfish techniques. But the whole middle range, for the most part, simply stare at you and improve little, if at all, turning in such typical examples of Engfish as this:

> I shall now attempt to explain the many factors involved with the assembling of a pull type curtain rod. I have recently encountered a situation where I was faced with a small piece of paper stating easy instructions and the parts of the rod itself. Now at first glance, one may consider assembling a curtain rod an easy task. . .

The paper did not have a mechanical error, the paragraphs were developed adequately, the organization was perfect, but the essay would not have been interesting even to the most avid homemaker. Why? Because it was not interesting to the student who wrote it. He was cranking out an assignment which followed the rules his English teachers have set forth. Nothing more, nothing less.

Macrorie wonders, and so do we, if this is really what we want from our students. It makes grading papers simple, we suppose, but what a dull task. And to think a student, after mastering Engfish, will burst forth with readable prose once he "finds a subject that really interests him" seems little short of miraculous.

UPTAUGHT denounces the method many of us have used to teach composition while it relates Macrorie's experiences searching for an alternative. It is not, however, a writing class handbook, a suitable text for all of our theories. The following semester one of us taught without any text and the other with the assigned text adapted through class discussion to our new theories. The first method gave thrilling results, along with a well-worn typewriter and ditto machine. The second method, although kinder to the machines, produced exciting results from the above average students; the remainder sank under the Engfish text.

Since then, at least three suitable texts have been published. Macrorie has written two textbooks: TELLING WRITING (NY: Hayden, 1973) for college and WRITING TO BE READ (NY: Hayden, 1971) for high school. Donald Hall, (writer, poet, teacher) has published WRITING WELL (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973) for either high school or college. Both authors practice what they suggest; all three texts are readable, something one says very seldom about textbooks on writing. Our students tell us they not only enjoy reading the chapters but actually read ahead! Although Hall works more with the sentence and its parts than does Macrorie, his approach to writing is similar. We discovered teaching Freshman English this past summer that our approach, easy to follow with Macrorie, also works well with Hall. Each of the three texts could be adapted to almost any level and could be used as a supplement in teaching various expository techniques. The approach we use works something like this:

You must first realize that we don't really "teach" writing: we "coach" it, much like the way a football coach doesn't teach football. He directs his teams and individuals on it to perfect natural abilities. The student who says, "I just can't write, I never could," is most likely afraid of writing. He has been criticized and preached at until his natural abilities for expression have been long since forgotten, much as the beauty of our childlike imaginations become deadened, often through fear of appearing foolish. All too often, he has not been encouraged or even allowed to write about something he cared about so that he ceased to have anything to say. Telling a student such as this, "Go ahead, write about whatever you want to this week," doesn't work. The curtain rod example cited above was the product of just such a directive, and look at the results. This type of student, and we do believe he is typical, has to be "coached" into remembering he has something worth saying.

Part of our coaching comes from discussing student writing from previous classes as we give an assignment and our current students' writings when we return them. Discussion aims at strong and weak points, possible improvements and, in general, ranges to include previous techniques covered, audience reaction, effectiveness of a particular tone and style to a specific subject, sentence structure relation to tone, and so forth. The trick here is keeping the discussions professional rather than personal. But our students enjoy these discussions and would probably devote the entire course to them if they had their way. The result is a tremendous carry-over into their own writings.

We also eliminate grades the first eight weeks, which serves to shift the students' purpose for writing from grades to critical satisfaction. We have tried this old device while teaching Engfish but discovered only a few students really responded to less pressure. However, no grades along with the discussions and the particular ordering of assignments leave most students preferring to continue gradeless the last eight weeks. Instead of grades we write lots of comments on the papers. First noting successes and then gently noting weaknesses and suggesting improvements. At midterm, and again at end of term for those who have continued gradeless, we hold scheduled conferences in which we and the student discuss his achievements as well as weaknesses and come to some agreement as to a midterm (final) grade or his general ability (average, above average, etc.). If we sound too idealistic, we have a pragmatic reason too: the first eight weeks assignments really are nearly impossible to grade without grading the student's quality as a human being also--as you will see.

A good place to start coaching a reluctant student is free writing; tell him to write anything that comes into his head for 15-30 minutes without any regard for form, subject, or even continuity. Most college students just can't do this the first time, even when you catch them off guard the first day of class when they haven't seen the text or really know what you, the teacher, are like. They turn out pieces which often begin this way:

> This is my sophomore year of college and I think I know the campus a little better. I'm no longer homesick and I have stabilized...

or like this:

> The way people feel about sex relationships is really a controversial subject. I think everyone has their own idea or thoughts...

But after you have shown them examples of what other students have done they improve rapidly, and what is more, even those who thought you were insane the first time you made the assignment begin to enjoy the exercises.

What is the purpose of free writing, you might ask. The students certainly do. The purpose is to break the Engfish habit. Most students, at least by the college level, crank out a formal introduction, body, conclusion paper, and most of them don't say anything worth reading. We are not denouncing the formal essay structure as an invalid approach to the essay. There are many times a formal structure works best, but too often students have the idea that it is the only legitimate form, so that often their subjects and the structure do not work well together. With this limited knowledge they often turn out what we call "canned writing" where the sole concern is getting the form and the required number of words. Haven't you ever received a paper where you could see the number of words penciled in the margins?

As the students become aware in their free writing just how mechanically they write and as the Engfish habit is broken, they come up with remarkably fresh pieces of writing. Within a 15-30 minute exercise they discover a number of ideas which might well be developed into an essay on a subject which interests them. They discover they can create images, metaphors, and description they never dreamed they could get on paper. Here are some short passages from free writing exercises done after their initial effort:

> ...15 minutes gone--where? Where does time go--back into infinity or does God recycle it like the Coors people recycle beer cans.
>
> ...article about a South African rhino that bumped jeeps off the roads & ate the metal of the cars. Rhinocerouses with headlights would be a chilling sight.
>
> Spiders...hang by a thred from the ceiling. A thread they make in their bodies. Can you imagine? Hanging by a thread from the ceiling when you want to. Making webs finer that the most beautiful lace...
> Picture an ear in a chair--facing you--you're waiting for it to say something. But it sez nothing.

From this totally unstructured writing we lead the students back through very informal essays to the formal so that by the end of the term they are writing formal papers (critical essays, classical arguments, and the like). Even more, most of them enjoy writing, even the type of paper they thought they hated before, because now their papers are interesting. They have learned that formal writing need not be dead writing.

However, before most students are ready to write interesting essays, they need to work on writing detail, for being far too general helps to make the average essay dull. Limiting the topic helps, but it is not enough. Often with a limited topic, students moan, "What am I going to say to fill up all that paper?" We give them a series of writing exercises which concentrate on accumulating concrete detail: showing the reader rather than telling him what they want him to see. For some students this comes easily, for others it is extremely difficult because it demands that they learn to see things in specific detail. As Henry Miller, in his charming book, TO PAINT IS TO LOVE AGAIN, tells us:

> To paint is to love again. It's only when we look with eyes of love that we see as the painter sees. His is a love, moreover, which is free of possessiveness. What the painter sees he is duty bound to share. Usually he makes us see and feel what ordinarily we ignore or are immune to. His manner of approaching the world tells us, in effect, that nothing is vile or hideous, nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision. To see is not merely to look. One must look-see. See into and around. Or, as John Marin once put it--'Art must show what goes on in the world.' (p. 8)

A number of exercises help the student learn to see and record detail. Geoffrey Summerfield once told a group at ASU that he sent a student home to "attend" her cat for thirty minutes. She was to watch, see, and record what her cat was all about. It is this type of activity that makes us aware of details. Journals are another worthwhile exercise for some students where they record details from their day, and Macrorie has a marvelous one he calls "fabulous realities" which directs the student to record the small ironies of life. Preoccupation, laziness, insensitivity--all of these need to be overcome if students are to become anything more than dully proficient. After our students really began to see, we began receiving writings like these:

> From the beginning, we were helpless before Connie. She ran down out of the Colorado Rockies and into our lives, yards of honeyed hair streaming out behind her.
>
> The silence was shattered as two bullets slammed into the horse's head. He didn't do much, just shuddered and died. A great glob of blood oozed heavily from his nostrils and spread jellylike underneath his head. It covered the seat and then in thick drops fell onto the pavement. It started to mix with the film of dirty water and oil spots on the pavement and shimmered an iridescent array of colors amidst dead cigarette butts, matches and stale manure.
>
> It's raining outside. She notices it's almost pouring as hard as the water running into her sink. But she feels nothing pouring into herself. Rather she matches her emotions to the draining water as she pulls the plug. She watches an occasional Kellog go through the drain. Her life sees occasional highlights.

If the students have broken their habit of writing Engfish and learned to see and accumulate detail so that their reader "sees" as well, they are ready to write entertaining, informative essays, provided they know their subject.

The subject students generally know the most about is themselves, so for the informal writing, it works well to have the writer focus on himself and his experiences. Assignments should be general guides which allow the student to choose the specific subject. For these informal essays we have used such guides as: "Describe a moment from your past. Show, don't just tell, your reader why the moment is unforgetable." Your concentration as a "coach" should be on particular writing devices the student should be using to perfect his natural abilities, such as focusing on one exercise, tightening sentence structure, working with sound, imagery progression in others. The above assignment can easily be used for a number of devices. We have used it for focus and tone, among others. The students' decision, then, is what devices will achieve that tone. In another exercise, about midway through the course, we return to the free writing exercise, asking the students to play around with imagery, phrasing, and the like. They come up with such writings as this:

> Her friends think our matching strange. When she flits brightly down the stairs to meet me sitting dark and stolid in her dormatory lounge I see those she lives with screw their faces in perplexity, wondering what their nightingale can see in this tortoise...
>
> And [she], who sees nothing in any face save love, lifts my eyes in her hands tenderly, showing me the wonders of her sky, while standing on my willing shoulders so that the touch of the earth might never mar her feet.

Following these exercises the student has developed some sense of style, but one method we have found extremely helpful in making him even more aware of style is to use some exercises imitating styles other than his own. To talk about style alone is not enough. We all know definitions are limitless, and it is awfully abstract to point at a Hemingway story or an essay by Tom Wolfe and say, "This is style." We have our students buy a copy of THE NEW YORKER magazine. We choose this magazine since it has some easily determined stylistic techniques, techniques students can recognize on even a casual reading, and along with it use some supplementary essays by E.B. White since he is one of the originators of what is often called "the casual style." (You might want to note an essay by W.H. Whyte titled "You too Can Be a Master of the Casual Style" if this approach appeals to you.) We analyze the magazine and essays from the point of view of sentence structure, tone, content, vocabulary, audience level, and so forth. Then the students attempt to either imitate or parody an article or essay from the issue they have. Since by this time the students are easily writing several pages, we regretfully quote only a few passages from the usually entertaining results. One student imitates Notes and Comments of the "Talk of the Town" section:

> While the rest of the nation is reacting in a somewhat blurred manner (myself included) concerning the rather strange appearance and disappearance of the famed Watergate tapes, Ralph Nader's (you all remember him) Capitol Hill News Service was busy taking a somewhat less than important survey of Senatorial aides' opinion of the senators.
>
> Thanks to this somewhat less than scientific survey, we are now relieved to know that Sen. Jackson has been, if I may say, "earning his salt" at least he has been according to the senatorial aides. In consulting the CHNS, we find that our "brightest" senator is no other than ole' Jacob Javits of New York, where else could he have come from?

Another student in a parody titled "Taken by the Town" writes:

> Now we don't suppose that you, in our wildest imaginations--and our imaginations are not generally, at least by the more informed circles, known to be tame--would waste what we suppose to be your precious reading time on magazines which are disheveled, sleazy, and somewhat devoid of meaning, at least to the more informed circles. (The uninformed circles, generally, are themselves made up of somewhat disheveled, sleazy, meaningless people who seldom read at all, much less what we in the informed circles consider to be truly informative. It is generally wise to avoid such uninformed circles, unless one is running for president, in which case one should frequent them exclusively.) Thus we at the NEW YORKER strive for the authoritative quality that we assume, if we do not deceive ourselves, you appreciate in a magazine.

THE NEW YORKER writing assignment has eased the student into writing about subjects outside himself, so from there we move into examining other patterns for the essay until we arrive at the traditional formal approach. We usually have students do one or more essays using successful essayists such as George Orwell or Loren Eisley for their structural patterns. These two writers usually have explicit thesis statements which may or may not appear in the introduction of their essays. In either case, the thesis is integrated into the content of the essay, not just tacked on at the beginning or end as students are so often inclined to do. Students are ready now to see in professionals the techniques they have been working on all term. Students at their own choosing write readable essays on such abstractions as the honesty of the American people, religious hypocrisy, movies' truth to life, and the like. Sounds horrible doesn't it? But the essays, based firmly in the student's own knowledge and experiences and using the techniques learned previously, are not only readable prose but worthwhile content. The students have something to say, and they say it well.

From this point to good critical writing and formal argument is not a gigantic leap. Most students, by this point in the term, feel good about writing and have some idea what it takes to make an interesting paper. They can see that one may use in formal writing many of the tools that make informal writing enjoyable, as this writing on Auden's poem, "The Unknown Citizen," shows:

> There is so much of so little to him that we all share some of the unknown citizen's undistinguishing attributes. To attack the unknown citizen is to attack the dreams of middle America. And yet, to attack that segment of society and its dreams is rather undistinguishing and dull in itself.
>
> His uniqueness lies in his blandness. The unknown citizen is the man who has managed to achieve the maximum in his life and has absolutely nothing to show for it.
>
> But the "Unknown Citizen" is directed at the intellectual elite. They are the only ones able to both understand and appreciate the significance of what is said. The reason is simple. The intellectual elites have a common language all their own. This language is more than a mere collection of words. It is an incorporation of common attitudes, opinions, and subtly inferred meanings. The words are not as important in themselves, as are the images and connotations they spark. Only the intellectual mind is able to successfully discern the intended meanings, implications and ramifications of the unknown citizen's "dilemma."
>
> The unknown citizen has achieved everything he has been brought up to believe he had to achieve. He has a home, a wife, children, a car, a radio, a television, a steady job and an insurance policy. He has fulfilled all of the necessities and none of the needs.
>
> Were the unknown citizen to examine this poem, little would be gained. It would pass through him without a trace. It assumes through its description that the unknown citizen is a clod with misnumbered priorities and misdirected goals. There was no reference to any extraordinary accomplishments or to anything beyond the expected maximization of the minimum.
>
> Written using the dullest words to create the most lifeless phrases and expressions, the total effect is drab. As drab as the lot of the unknown citizens of the world. He doesn't just sound dull. He feels

dull. But again, only the social intellectuals looking beyond the bare bones of the American dream feel this. The unknown citizen, if anything, feels inspired and motivated to work harder to achieve society's goals. After all, a man presumably on an assembly line in the Fudge Motor Corporation made it. It is a challenge.

Intellectuality is a luxury. The unknown citizen labors painfully to make society's goals and, therefore, has neither time or energy to question and analyze what is going on. The intellectual has either had these objectives catered to for him, developed a different set of objectives, or simply has none at all. He has the time to think and pursue things beyond the mere fulfillment of someone else's goals.

The unknown citizen's concerns are those of everyone else. He is not as much of a thinker as one who just follows. When the country is at war he is for war. When at peace he cherishes peace. He enjoys a drink and a newspaper (probably the sports section). But beyond this there exists an empty space. Books are not mentioned. The arts remain hidden.

The irony is intense. His job is that of a doer. He does what he is told. He doesn't make decisions, but is guided by those who do. Laboring on the assembly line, it is unlikely he can afford the autos he makes for those who can. It is unlikely that he can afford his five symbols of virility. To live to make cars you cannot afford and bear children he can't support, own televisions and radios that stifle his imagination, fight in a war, have an operation and die is, upon review, a rather pointless existence. The unknown citizen is pulled from nowhere and left just as quickly.

The poem can have a different effect on each person who reads it. The man who sets it down and exclaims, "what is the point of all this," has, most innocently, touched the central nerve. That is the author's question. What is the point? What is the point of the unknown citizen's existence? But the author uses the searching eye of the intellectual. He looks from above and not from within. Therefore, his effectiveness with others who look from above, the intellectual, is boundless. However, the unknown citizen, trapped and surrounded by his equals, has a limited range of vision. He cannot see and therefore cannot appreciate the complexity of his situation. He is part of the process unable to see the total process as one vast unit to which he has dedicated himself. The intellectual already know what the author says. The intellectual's acceptance is assumed as is his understanding.

The unknown citizen does not understand the background, philosophy, attitudes, objectives or the desires that shaped the poem. As a result, he cannot understand the message, but only the words. Yet the words alone are steril. The poem, standing alone, devoid of its background and vital associations is ineffectual, the backgrounds and associations belong to the intellectual, and he needs no further convincing.

By itself, the poem is an exercise in futility. When viewed as part of a movement or social thought, it can become a critical focus. It's value lies not in what it says, but the total effect it may help to create when combined with grassroots social movement it helps to spawn or that spawned it.

For their formal argument assignment we use an outline condensed from Edward P.J. Corbett's CLASSICAL RHETORIC FOR THE MODERN STUDENT (NY: Oxford U

Press, 1965), so that again the students are made aware of pattern as a part of method. We pick a topic for class discussion and research before they attempt to write their argument, and you would be amazed at the colorful, interesting essays they turn out using an elaborate pattern of the same form they had used before when they wrote Engfish essays, a pattern that now is a vehicle for their content rather than an end in itself.

As you have probably detected by now, each step is not so different from what most of us have tried at one time or other. We all ask for specifics, details, interest, point, and readable prose. What makes the difference is the ordering of techniques, a text which discusses *with* the student rather than talks down to him, considerable in-class or group discussion of the students' own writings, and lots of constructive written comments along with individual conferences. Such a combination produces students who are writing to satisfy their own newly achieved critical awareness. One student last semester said, "I thought this course would be a snap like all my other comp classes: plug in and crank out. But wow! I never worked so hard. I must have rewritten each paper at least four times before I was just sort of satisfied!" And this was said with pride, not complaint. The general complaint at the end of the course is that there is not more time in the course or a second semester added to it. Having discovered they *can* write interesting, informative essays, they want to practice and learn more about it.

NOTIONS ABOUT SKILLS AND A SEQUENCE OF SKILLS IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION

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There is much that is mysterious about skills necessary to produce written composition. Richard Braddock noted in RESEARCH IN WRITTEN COMPOSITION (Champaign: NCTE, 1963) that, "Today's research in written composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy." (p. 5) That statement is as true today as it was then. There is also much still mysterious about the way we humans acquire and use other language skills. One linguist writes that, "We know very little about the actual processes by which children learn language." (Carol Chomsky, "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure," HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, Vol. 42, No. 1, February 1972, p. 33) Yet, though we may still be close to the incantations of alchemy, better understandings about language use and acquisition are developing and some of those understandings seem to be applicable to the processes involved in making a written composition.

For example, a recent study of the stages at which 36 children (K-4) learned certain complex grammatical structures showed that there is an "underlying developmental sequence." (Carol Chomsky, "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure," HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, Vol. 42, No. 1, February 1972, p. 26) This developmental sequence moves from simple and common structures to more complex and uncommon structures. (Carol Chomsky, "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure," HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, Vol. 42, No. 1, Feburary 1972, p. 22) Though this research was done with oral language it relates to written language. In the context of written composition, the point of importance of this research is the developmental nature of language acquisition. Not only is written language potentially more complex in vocabulary and syntax than oral language, it is different than oral language in many respects. Consequently, success in producing written language, though it depends on success in producing oral language, also depends on the producers learning of the differences between written and oral language. Further, it is probable that the intellectual skills necessary to producing written language are equally as developmental as those involved in producing oral language. That is, the skills proceed from simple and common to complex and uncommon. What those skills are, and what developmental sequence they have, is what I wish to explore.

I propose that there are three overlapping skill areas in written composition, and I propose that the first two areas have a unique developmental sequence. The first skill area is that of intellectual skills. The second is motor skills, and the third is skills in the use of conventions of written language.

Before going farther I had better try to make clear what is in my mind when I say written composition, and intellectual skills. A person makes a written composition when he produces in print or script a series of phrases and sentences which represent meaning. This definition implies that written composition is a mental and physical act. The intellectual skill necessary to the act, the mental part, is related to the writer choosing some thoughts (meaning) which he then expresses by choosing a series of words (language) to represent the meaning. An intellectual skill is a skill involved in an intellectual operation such as adding two numbers together, or finding a word in a dictionary to check for spelling or meaning. (Robert M. Gagne, THE CONDITIONS OF LEARNING, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970, pp. 83-85) A complex intellectual operation such as writing a letter would involve many intellectual skills.

The motor skills, or physical part of the act, are in the production of writing (printing, scripting, typing). The motor skills of printing or scripting are different from those in typing since composing at the typewriter seems strange or impossible to writers accustomed to composing with pen in hand.

Whether or not there is some sequence to the intellectual and physical skills related to written composition is important to how composition may best be learned. Let me repeat that all of us had some developmental sequence to learning the intellectual and motor skills, but that there is no developmental sequence to learning the conventions. First, the skills, and then later the conventions. In broad outline this sequence may be quite similar for all who learn to compose in a written form. Yet, the specific details and age at which the skills are acquired, i.e., the particulars of the sequence, are probably quite different for each person. That this is likely can be seen from the way oral language is learned.

Children begin expressing themselves with single words (holophrases) which carry the meaning of whole sentences. A child who says "cow" may mean, "I see a cow." Yet, which words one child learns and uses in this manner may be different from another child. Also, children all graduate from holophrases to using a syntax to put together two or three word phrases. When they graduate to the syntax and what words they use will differ from child to child. The child is not taught in a formal way to use holophrases and then to progress to a two or three word syntax but he does learn and use them in that order. He learns them by being exposed to language. Though the above described sequence of beginning language learning has substantial experimental research to support it, there is no experimental research that I know of which has set out to verify the skills, or skill sequence related to making a composition. Therefore, what I am suggesting comes from my inferences about composition from research in language learning and the learning of motor skills.

Now, let me propose a probable sequence of two groups of intellectual skills. The first group of intellectual skills are those necessary to producing oral language sufficiently well to communicate feelings and needs to adults and friends. The speaking of language has a strong parallel in scripting and reading language, and this suggests that the second group of skills are those necessary for word indentification and for reading for meaning. According to John Lotz the visualizing of language through script (including reading) parallels the auditory language process which is speaking.

Lotz represents this parallel by the following model. (John Lotz, "How Language is Conveyed by Script," LANGUAGE BY EAR AND BY EYE, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973, p. 123. James F. Kavanagh and Ignatius G. Mattingly, eds.)

		PROCESS		
		Production	Product	Reception
Medium	Visual	Writing	Script	Reading
	Auditory	Articulation	Speech	Speech Perception

He emphasizes that the model suggests that being able to write demands the ability to read even though being able to read does not carry with it the ability to write. It is logical that in order to expect a student to write he must be able to read.

Since the intellectual skills necessary to reading are prerequisites to written composition, that explains the pre-reader attempts at writing which are scribbles. Frequently, first attempts at writing have spaces between scribbles which may show that the child senses spaces between words. The child may have developed this sense from books he has seen and which were read to him. I have observed many children "writing" in this fashion. I have also seen children who can read and print some words try to write cursive and produce neatly spaced scribbles. In both cases, the skills necessary for scripting are not present.

In summary, the sequence of intellectual skills prerequisite to written composition begins with those skills necessary for oral composition. Oral language skills are followed by the concept that oral language can somehow be represented by marks on paper. It is after beginning to read that his concept becomes fully enough developed for the child to be able to know what shapes the marks must take for an accurate representation of language to occur. I will return to these and other intellectual skills.

Accurate representation of language requires more than intellectual skills. It also requires five motor skills. The five motor skills necessary to hold and maneuver a pen or pencil are difficult to master. Generally, practice and age improve the motor skills greatly. Even when a child has learned to shape letters by print or by cursive, words must be formed by using patterns of letters (spelling). Further, the act of writing and shaping words must be physically fluent enough that thought processes are not so encumbered with telling muscles how to piece together words and phrases that meaning receives secondary attention or becomes lost. In short, a word, even a word series, must flow from practiced muscles as well as from knowledge about how words are spelled.

Therefore, another area of skills is motor skills sufficiently fine and practiced to allow shaping of letters. This group of skills also includes "integrated movement sequences" sufficiently large in number to allow the writer to concentrate on meaning. Frank Smith speaks directly to this matter in his article, "Alphabetic Writing--A Language Compromise?"

> Like the reader, the practised writer has command of a large repertoire of written word forms that he can use without reference to individual letters. And just as immediate identification is the fastest and most natural system for reading words, so the analogous immediate representation of words is the fastest and most natural way of writing them. Writers rapidly acquire the ability to write large numbers of words as units which I shall call integrated movement sequences. (Frank Smith, PSYCHOLINGUISTICS AND READING, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973, pp. 124-125)

Smith states that these two motor skills are necessary to fluent writing. The first motor skill is a pool of words which may be immediately represented as units and the second is a pool of groups of words, such as, "of the man," or even whole sentences which may be immediately represented as units. Without them a writer stumbles along in somewhat the same manner as a basketball player stumbles through an unpracticed maneuver. Without them a writer laboriously tries to compose at the typewriter when handwriting is his usual manner of composing. Both are laborious because the new integrated movement sequences have not been established. These concepts of immediate representation and integrated movement sequences have valuable implications for the classroom. I will return to those implications after considering the last skill area: the conventions of written composition.

If a writer is to use the conventions of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and organization, he must have knowledge of them and must have the intellectual skills to guide appropriate use. Where and how the conventions are used will frequently confuse a writer even beyond grade 12. Nevertheless, somehow, a writer must learn what he can use to replace the intonations and pauses of his oral language however inadequate the replacements may be in comparison to the oral conventions. And, he must learn some arbitrary conventions, such as capitalization, which are visual cues unrelated to oral language. Further, words must be spelled fairly close to the convention or they will be misread. They must be spelled exactly like the convention prescribes if the connotation of illiteracy is to be avoided.

Paragraphing at reasonable times in respect to the appearance of print and in respect to content is also expected. Finally, conventions of organization must be learned. Some ways of organization seem natural and others are more contrived. Simple "tell it as it happened" methods are easier and less contrived than "comparison and contrast," and time sequences juggled for a particular effect.

These and other conventions are difficult to learn and even more difficult to apply because of varying degrees of arbitrariness which govern their use. Consequently, students struggle with these during their early years in school and some never master a significant number of them. Those they do not master they tend to avoid. Nevertheless, the conventions are the easiest items to teach directly about composition because they are so prescriptive.

To some degree the area of conventions is muddied because knowledge about them is not a skill but the use of them is a skill. The main reason for separating them from other intellectual skills is because their use does not seem to have any developmental pattern. There is no pattern to learning them except to say that the easier, less variable, conventions will be learned first.

Now that I have touched on the contents of the skill areas I named earlier, it is time to consider some implications for teaching. I am not sure what the developmental sequence of skills is within each of the eight steps below except that probably it moves from simple and common skills to complex and uncommon skills. Also probably, work in each of the three skill areas in intermingled as the composer of writing processes. Here are my speculations about sequence.

First are the intellectual skills necessary for generating fluent oral language.

Second are the intellectual skills necessary for reading for word identification and for meaning. This will include discovering some of the conventions of written language.

Third are the motor skills necessary for shaping letters and their words.

Fourth are the motor skills necessary for immediate representation of words and word clusters through integrated movement sequences.

Fifth are the intellectual skills of calling forth the integrated movement sequences on demand. This means being able to generate a volume of printed or scripted language which has a meaningful sequence.

Sixth are the intellectual skills of inspecting the scripted language to determine if it sufficiently represents the intended meaning. This will include consideration of the conventions of language particularly to those which convey meaning.

Seventh are intellectual skills of manipulating the composition to make it represent intended meaning. This may include calling on more integrated movement sequences, editing, organizing and other manipulations large and small.

Eighth is the intellectual skill of knowing when to stop fooling around with a written composition. That is, knowing when a reasonable compromise between exact intended meaning and represented meaning has been made.

For the above skill areas and eight steps to be of maximum use in teaching written composition, much more specificity in the naming of skills would be necessary. Also necessary is much more knowledge about the unique developmental sequence in each area and about the interrelationships among areas than is now available. Nevertheless, some practical suggestions can be made.

In the elementary and secondary grades much time should be spent in class in prewriting activities which emphasize the intellectual skills of oral expression and reading (steps one and two). It is likely that the more complex the language which a child can use orally and can read, then the more complex will be the language he will be able to produce in written expression. If he can produce complex written language, then the student's range of expression will be greater and this will allow him more options (step six) in representing his intended meaning.

In the elementary grades much time should be devoted to giving students practice in developing a large pool of integrated movement sequences to draw on when writing (steps three and four). This will allow the students greater freedom in attending to meaning when in the heat of composition and should make the revision tasks easier. The pool of sequences can be encouraged by assuring some daily writing time where word sequences, not just spelling, occur. On the secondary level this may be accomplished by having frequent writing assignments. Although frequent writing may not improve the quality of expression as it has been measured in numerous research studies, still it should allow for practice in the intellectual skill of generating written language and in enlarging pools of integrated movement sequences (steps three, four and five). These are prerequisite to quality writing and may make writing more fluent for irregular writers and thereby increase their chances of improving the quality of their written composition.

For all students, caring about what they write is a necessity for re-writing and editing (steps six and seven). They also need to be given time for and assistance in the hard, hard work of re-working compositions for accurate representation of meaning. Perhaps in-class demonstrations of how you revised writing of your own, or how a student revised a piece of writing would show the intellectual skills in action and stimulate reluctant revisers. Or, perhaps the Ken Macrorie (Ken Macrorie, UPTAUGHT, NY: Hayden, 1970) approach to having students sitting around and discussing their own and other student compositions would work well for you. It seems to have worked for him.

Somehow students need to understand that the writing of meaning is a compromise between what is intended and what becomes written. They need to understand that they are honing intellectual skills in attempts at accuracy of representation. We can help them at this compromise by giving worthwhile assignments and by assisting them, in individual conferences if necessary, to do their best at making a written composition.

In conclusion, until much more is known about language learning and about the linguistic act of making a composition, we will still do incantations and hope that the spell will work. Hopefully, the above skill areas and suggested sequence for them will give you some new words and insights with which to work the old magic.

"THERE'S NOTHING TO WRITE ABOUT"

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Creative writing students sometimes display the heights of their creativity, not in poetry or prose, but in their attempts to evade writing. "Let us go out on the campus," they ask. "We need the inspiration of the trees and the outdoors." Translated into ordinary, everyday language, that means they want to go to the snack bar.

Still, they have a valid point. In elective courses, where a concentrated period of time is given to the study of one subject, ideas are exhausted rapidly, and the four walls of my windowless classroom apparently were designed to keep the world out, not to bring light or inspiration in. Lists of suggestions from me, orally or in writing, didn't seem to help much.

Having been impressed for some time with the value of professional movies to stimulate student discussion and writing, I wondered if a home movie camera couldn't be used to film movies specifically for creative writing, movies that would give some sort of setting and mood upon which the student could build a poem or short prose work. I was also concerned with in-class writing assignments, something that would encourage the student to do his best, and at the same time, give me some in-class, unrevised writing to compare with the student's at-home work. The movies, then, were kept short, four to seven minutes. They were shown without comment, and the students were required to turn in whatever they had written, complete or incomplete, by the end of the class session.

So far I have completed four movies especially designed for this use, and have shown several others. (Teaching film study during the same semester gave me the opportunity to use student films in creative writing.) If the student writing done after watching these movies is judged on the basis of originality, honesty, and careful choice of words, then the results have been successful. Despite the unity of theme, the student writing itself has been quite varied. Some of the movies have not resulted in good writing, however, so some principles of putting together this type of film seem to be emerging.

"Never Again" is a film that worked. All the shots for this movie were taken in the ghost town portion of Jerome during the late afternoon when shadows cast a desolate appearance. People were carefully left out of all shots, and houses were photographed individually, to present to the audience a series of stark, decaying images. Later, scenes taken from an old cemetery elsewhere were spliced in, with close-up views of dates and epitaphs. ("In Memory of our Daughter, Rosalie Erickson, died on March 4, 1876, Four Years of Age--No One Knew Her But To Love Her.") The title, of course, was selected with a view to adding to the mood, as was the music to accompany the film. The second movement of the NEW WORLD SYMPHONY, said to be based on a spiritual "Going Home", aided the feeling of sadness at the lost past. The only "life" in the film is the movement of the wind in the trees, and one scene, near the beginning, of a child with her grandfather, caught in a movement as if he were sharing the memories of the town he once knew.

The film works, I think, because there is no plot, no story--only a series of mood evoking shots set to appropriate music. The student fills in a meaning or a story, perhaps. He can interpret the mood in a variety of ways--memory, death, regret, decay, nostalgia. His writing, then, is guided into a general direction, but the choice of the exact path is his.

Another movie that seems to work is "Fair." Various shots of the Arizona State Fair are shown, beginning with children laughing as they enjoy the rides, stare open-mouthed at the gaudy colors around them, or gaze in fascination at puppets, skaters, or high-wire performers. Quick shots continue the mood of the fun and excitement of the fair until the camera hits the half-sick side shows. The music changes from the happy, bouncy jazz of the beginning to the strident, harsh sounds of Leon Russell's "Carney." Slowly the scene changes into night when the rides are giant spiders, or weird color machines spinning at crazy angles. The music changes to the bizarre "Acid Annapolis", again by Leon Russell. It ends; no story, no plot. The student builds his writing from the mood, his memories, and the music.

For a third movie, I used a Bob Dylan song, "I Shall Be Released," which expresses the thoughts of a prisoner yearning for freedom. For the movie, a student, looking appropriately dejected, was photographed at various places around the school campus, in shots emphasizing his loneliness, his separateness from others. Low angle shots were used frequently to give the illusion of the student being overwhelmed by the buildings and fences.

This movie worked well even though it was the first one that used a song definitely telling a simple story, narrowing the direction of the student's writing. Encouraged by this, I went on to the next movie, which taught me the dangers of using songs with a strong story line.

Taking another Leon Russell song, "Me and Baby Jane," I attempted to film the story as straight-forward as possible. "Me and Baby Jane" relates the saga of a young boy who is in love with a girl, but, alas, they drift apart. When they meet again, much later, she has freaked out on hard drugs and the boy has only memories of what she once was.

The apparent problem with this movie was that the story line is too definite. It is more than a mood; it is an honest-to-goodness melodrama with a plot, characters, and a conclusion. The writing that came from this movie was written as if from the same assembly line machine. Rather than a mood and a setting, the students had been given a completed story to re-tell. It didn't work.

Perhaps the movies that did work also had some help because they were shot locally. Many of the students had visited the places they saw on the screen. In a way, the movies built for those students a bridge to their own memories, reviving them, bringing to life again forgotten experiences and feelings.

If you own a home movie camera, you should certainly try to make your own creative writing movies. (Own a 35mm camera instead? You might look over the movies outlined above and note how easily each of them could be shot in still pictures, put with music in the same way, and used as a slide tape presentation.)

A few simple steps are all you have to remember.

1. Have a mood, a feeling, an emotional goal in your mind before you start shooting you movie. Try to plan every shot to fit this mood, avoiding telling a specific story, particularly if it follows the words of a song.
2. Let your mood determine your camera work. For example, at Jerome the camera lingered on the houses in long, leisurely shots. At the fair, shorter shots were used to try to fit the movement and excitement.
3. Use locales that students in your class might have visited. Arizona has unlimited possibilities: Indian ruins, canyons, ghost towns, rodeos

and festivals, back roads, border towns.

4. Add music. It may take extra time to run through your movie with several possible music choices, but the result will be worth it. Many students like to be involved in this activity, too.
5. Add a title that will fit the mood of the movie. While not vitally important, it can give the student one more possibility that may strike his mind with inspiration.

How much time does all this take? Some, of course. But if you already own a movie camera, get in the habit of carrying it when you take the kids to Disneyland or to the fair, or when you show visiting relatives Oak Creek Canyon. While everyone is enjoying the day, try to capture the mood of the setting on film. Once you see the student writing results from your movies, you will begin thinking in movie terms every time you leave home for a day's outing or a vacation.

There's nothing to write about? There is, if you can bring it into the classroom, live and in color, via your home movie camera.

NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Charles Davis, University of Arizona

Annually the National Council of Teachers of English sponsors the Achievement Awards in Writing, a program offering recognition to outstanding student writers. Each of the award winners is recommended as an exceptionally qualified candidate for college admission and scholarship or other financial assistance.

High school juniors from all over the United States are nominated by a teacher of English and a school administrator, and each candidate then submits three samples of writing: an autobiographical sketch, a sample of his or her best writing, and a response to an impromptu theme topic, this year asking what--besides suffering--one needs to be wise. Each state is allotted a number of winners equal to twice the number of its delegation in the U. S. House of Representatives; accordingly, Arizona is allotted eight winners.

From all states, more than 6,400 students entered the contest for 1973; there were 74 candidates nominated by Arizona. The number of possible nominations from each school is determined by the school's total enrollment in grades ten through twelve: one nominee for every 500 students.

Each candidate' writing is examined by a team of judges chosen from among English teachers in colleges and high schools. The Arizona judges for 1973 were Mary Elizabeth Green, English, Arizona State University, Tempe; David Hochstettler, English, Yavapai College, Prescott; Richard Hughes, English, Coronado High School, Scottsdale; Robert Longoni, General Studies/Writing, Pima College, Tucson; Irene Sykes, English and Speech, Tuba City High School, Tuba City; and Edna Webb, English, Douglas High School, Douglas.

The six winners for 1973 come from all over the state, from Parker to Nogales. They are given below in alphabetical order, along with the names of the English teachers who nominated them.

WINNER	HIGH SCHOOL	NOMINATED BY
Patricia Ann Caddell	Rincon, Tucson	Laura Hollander
Cecil Henry Hoeft	Parker	Arthur J. Laughlin
Kay Marie Jett	Tucson	Stanley Wagner
Susan Abigail Korrick	Camelback, Phoenix	Clyde C. Morrison
Kent Eugene Lichty	Alhambra, Phoenix	Mary G. Tweedy
Valerie Jean Matsumoto	Nogales	Doris Seibold
Patricia Ann Morton	Cholla, Tucson	Jane Johnson
Stephanie Ann Tolleson	Washington, Glendale	Lian Enger

Many teachers want to see a sample of a winner's writing. Miss Valerie Matsumoto was given high marks for her autobiographical sketch, which follows.

THE FIRST SIXTEEN YEARS

Our family has lived in Nogales, Arizona, for the last seven of my sixteen years. That is not a long time, and yet our first years here seem centuries past and life in the Imperial Valley in California even more remote. When I look back, I see someone who is not me, a person of totally different mind and behavior.

I was a sheltered child, inquisitive, full of fantasies and make-believe--a chatterbox, friendly and fearless. It was easy for me to believe in God and the goodness of people. No one thought anything of my being Oriental. My friends were more intrigued by my prosthesis, which I matter-of-factly explained to them, and they accepted it as part of me. Everything, except New Math, seemed clear and understandable.

Then we moved.

Thinking back to those early days here, I see a very naive, trusting girl--extremely gullible--and lonely. I see a child with eager, impatient ideas and plans; a selfish possessiveness; a love of books and animals and flowers. One who believed the spiteful gossip of new "friends"; one who had never really heard vulgarities or obscenities and knew not how to cope with or ignore them--and so shuddered or giggled obediently. One who didn't know she was being used, a dupe. One who could not understand--at first--how others ignored and ridiculed her and that those most liked were the ones who maligned her. I also see a girl who, while struggling with loneliness and misery and confusion, was discovering Arizona country and wildlife--watching tadpoles going through metamorphosis, finding bits of agate, learning to spot the delicate lavender blossoms of the wild onion, wading in streams--all new experiences.

In recent years, I have learned much about music and art; I am less dependent on friends and staying in group activities. I am becoming involved with my own interests, trying to learn from all experiences, trying not to judge people so readily. I have discovered that one is blessed if one can count true friends on one hand--or one finger. Perhaps I am beginning to understand others--and myself. . .

NEW RHETORICS AND ADOLESCENT FICTION: ARE THEY COMPATIBLE?

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and
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In the past decade rhetoricians have taken a new look at paragraph structure and have come up with some interesting new theories which are making a significant impact on the teaching of composition. Among the most useful of these new theories are Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of the paragraph, the tagmemic approach of Alton Becker, and the structural approach as explained by Paul Rodgers. (Francis Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, October 1965, pp. 144-56; Alton Becker, "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, December 1965, pp. 237-42; Paul Rodgers, "The Stadium of Discourse," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, October 1967, pp. 178-85. The reader may also want to look at several other excellent articles, such as David Karrfalt, "The Generation of Paragraph and Larger Units," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, October 1968, pp. 211-17; or Josephine Miles, "What We Compose," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, October 1963, pp. 146-54.) But if these theories are to realize their full impact, if they are to become anything more than just theories, it will be up to classroom teachers to translate them into effective practice and incorporate them into existing programs. The purpose in this paper is to determine whether these new methods of rhetorical analysis really work in the fiction that young people are reading today. We have looked at several novels and have found three especially interesting--THE OUTSIDERS (Viking) by S.E. Hinton, DAVE'S SONG (Bantam) by Robert McKay, and THE NITTY GRITTY (Dell) by Frank Bonham. Before explaining what we found, it might be appropriate to describe briefly something of the nature of the new theories of paragraph analysis.

Six of Francis Christensen's most important essays are collected in a single, paperbound volume entitled NOTES TOWARD A NEW RHETORIC. In this text Christensen explains both sentence and paragraph structure in terms of "generative" rhetoric. Christensen's central thesis is that all writing is constructed from four principles: addition, modification in terms of forward and backward movement, levels of generality, and texture. A sentence from Thoreau's WALDEN illustrates his technique of analysis:

(1) It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, (base clause)
    (2) dank, clammy, and aguish, (adjective cluster)
    (2) only here a board and there a board (adverbial)
        (3) which wouldn't bear removal (relative clause)

Thoreau begins with a general description of the interior of the cabin--the "dark" and the "dirt floor." As the sentence moves forward, the description becomes more specific. Both elements labeled "2" give more precise information about the base clause. The level "3" modifier, here a relative clause, is a more specific detail of the level "2" modifier, "only here a board and there a board."

It is important to see that the elements labeled "2" are parallel rhetorically (they both provide further information about the base clause) but not grammatically (one is an adjectival, the other an adverbial). Christensen's primary concern is with rhetoric and the rhetorical process rather than with grammar.

Alton Becker's tagmemic approach offers a three-fold analysis of paragraph sequences, TRI, PS and QA. Closely akin to slot-substitution grammar, the TRI analysis labels the topic sentence of the paragraph "T," a sentence which restates the topic "R," and any supporting illustration "I." The PS sequence represents a paragraph organized by "Problem-Solution;" the QA sequence represents a "Question-

Answer" plan of organization. The following passage from THE NITTY GRITTY illustrates the TRI sequence:

> (T) The Matthews family sat around the kitchen table. (R) There were Charlie, his parents, and the two younger children, Buster and Callie. (I) Charlie minded his own business, and kept forking in the food. (p. 7)

The presentation of the Matthews family represents the "topic" of the passage (the reader will probably note that it is very similar to what Christensen calls the "base clause" or "level 1"). The focus is narrowed in the second sentence to a listing of the members who are present at the table. This in turn is further narrowed to a description of just one member, Charlie.

Another theory of discourse analysis is that presented by Paul Rodgers who sees paragraph structure as ". . . the web of argument, the pattern of thought flow, the system of alliances and tensions among associated statements." Within the paragraph structure one finds two types of statements, accretion and adjunction. Accretion is a process by which the original idea is extended, expanded, transformed. Rodgers illustrates in the passage from Kipling:

> There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
> And every single one of them is right!

The first clause represents the topic, the second an accretive expansion of the topic. By contrast the process of adjunction refines, gives examples, or "merely supports the claim in the first clause," as the second clause in the passage:

> There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
> Twelve are found in Pakistan, the others in Bombay.

Adjunction represents a description, a further refinement, or perhaps a microscopic analysis of a topic. Accretion represents an expansion or evaluation of the topic, an effort to link the topic to the larger world.

At this point the reader may question whether or not these new theories really are appropriate at the secondary level. Despite the fact that they may seem difficult at first, we believe that they provide the classroom teacher with some important new tools which heretofore have not been available. In the first place by showing how sentences and paragraphs are put together, they represent a new dimension of reading skill. Second, they provide students with some specific means for organizing their sentences and paragraphs. Christensen's ideas on texture, for example, also reveal a lot about arrangement and organization. Third, and perhaps most important, is a fact pointed out in a recent article by Professor Winterowd at the University of Southern California. These theories are potentially a way of knowing, a way of discovering more about a given topic, or even discovering a topic itself. In short, they can be used as the means of invention by the young writer.

Now let's consider what happens when the theories are applied to some specific passages. The following from DAVE'S SONG illustrates Becker's TRI method of analysis. The topic which is expressed in the first sentence ("I just didn't know where I was going. . .") is refined in the second ("I was losing myself. . ."). The last two sentences serve as illustrations or further refinements.

> (T) I just didn't know where I was going or what was happening to me. (R) Oh, I don't mean I didn't know. . . I was losing myself. . . (I) The girl in the mirror looked so different, and the most confusing thing was that the thoughts in her head. . . were completely different. (I) I was suddenly afraid that I was going to be one of those girls. . . (p. 3)

Another sample from the same book shows how the Christensen techniques might be applied:

(1) One of the troubles was that just at the time I got my new name I also began to get a lot of new ideas about life in general and Tylerton in particular.
    (2) I turned violently against pits and stockyards. . .
    (2) I didn't actually turn against Pop--I still loved him, maybe more than ever--but I couldn't stand the work he did.
        (3) It seemed somehow grubby and mean. (p. 5)

In the first sentence ("1"), the author introduces the topic--troubles arisir from new ideas. In the next two sentences (both labeled "2") the source of the troubles is revealed: the protagonist has turned violently against pits and stockyards and against her father's work. The last sentence ("3") offers an evaluative statement of the word work, a word which first appeared in the level 2 sentence preceding it.

Now a single passage from THE NITTY GRITTY illustrates both of Rodgers' principles, both accretion and adjunction:

> "Been in jail, followed the crops, rode garbage trucks, and washed dishes," his father was saying. "Every place a Negro's supposed to go before he goes to his grave. But thisyer janitor job sours my blood. Everything they gave me to work with is broke. A junkman wouldn't bid five dollars on the whole building. Then, Mr. Akers jumps me when the elevator sticks." (p. 8)

The first sentence is simply a list of activities--"been in jail, followed the crops, rode garbage trucks, and washed dishes." The second sentence, however, reveals that it is not merely a cataloging of random activities. The second sentence ties all the activities together with a single unifying theme: these are things a Negro is expected to do. Since new and significant information is added to the first statement, this addition is an example of accretion.

The same passage also reveals an example of adjunction. The third sentence in the passage makes a statement ("But thisyer janitor job sours my blood") which is followed by an example of supporting evidence ("Everything they give me to work with is broke"). The relationship between the two statements is causal; the two could be easily linked with the conjunction because.

Our review of these novels leads us to conclude that many passages do indeed reflect the theories of Christensen, Becker and Rodgers, and it has confirmed our belief that their theories are extremely valuable in the teaching of reading and writing. Some of the passages we examined, however, do not fall so easily into definite patterns and neat categories. We have found at least three factors which seem to work against precise classification: (1) the occurrence of "broken" sentences; (2) multiple topics within a single paragraph; and (3) the frequent expansion of a topic, rather than the kind of restriction which Christensen and Becker suggest.

The following from DAVE'S SONG (p. 2) illustrates how some sentences are broken apart from their regular order:

> There weren't any boys in Tylerton I ever thought of marrying.
> Well, maybe one. Malcom Reed.

Normally this could be expressed in one sentence:

> There weren't any boys in Tylerton I ever thought
> of marrying except Malcom Reed.

Passages such as this one provide useful material for practice in sentence combining. Students might rewrite broken sentences and put them into regular order. Or the teacher might ask students to identify normal sentences and recast them in the broken (or perhaps more accurately, the conversational) mode of modern fiction and modern advertising. According to recent studies by John Mellon and by Frank O'Hare, this kind of activity is valuable for helping young people achieve syntactic dexterity.

The passage below from THE OUTSIDERS (p. 170) illustrates how some paragraphs seem to have more than one basic topic:

> I knew he liked to pick fights, had the usual Soc belief that living on the West Side made you Mr. Super-Tuff, looked good in dark wine-colored sweaters, and was proud of his rings. *But what about the Bob Sheldon that Cherry Valance knew*? She was a smart girl; she didn't like him just because he was good-looking. Sweet and friendly, stands out from the crowd--that's what she had said. A real person, the best buddy a guy ever had, kept trying to make somebody stop him--Randy had told me that. *Did he have a kid brother who idolized him?* Maybe a big brother who kept bugging him not to be so wild? His parents let him run wild--because they loved him too much or too little? *Did they hate us now*? I hoped they hated us, that they weren't full of that pity-the-victims-of-environment junk the social workers kept handing Curly Shepard every time he got sent off to reform school. I'd rather have anybody's hate than their pity. But, then, maybe they understood, like Cherry Valance. I looked at Bob's picture and *I could begin to see the person we had killed*. A reckless, hot tempered boy, cocky and scared stiff at the same time.

This paragraph seems to have at least four topic sentences, or "T" slots, which we have identified with underlining. Although each of these statements is sufficient within itself to serve as the topic sentence of a full paragraph, such is not the case. They are all put together in *one* paragraph, and at first glance the paragraph seems something of a hodgepodge. Closer examination, however, reveals that there is an organizing principle at work in the passage, a subtle and yet effective technique based on the idea of association. A word in one sentence seems to suggest the thought for the next sentence, until very shortly the paragraph is either a long way from where it started or else it has circled back to where it began. The master of this kind of wandering is of course Holden Caulfield, whose spiritual and physical pilgrimage is reflected in the paragraph style of THE CATCHER IN THE RYE. Although such paragraphs are frustrating to analyze, they are easy to read--maybe even easier than normal paragraphs--for the reader often fills in necessary transitions and picks up small psychological clues in the very direction of the paragraph. The theory of paragraph anaylsis which comes closest to this pattern is Christensen's subordinate sequence, though Christensen seems to stress the semantic rather than the psychological aspect of organization.

Some of the paragraphs we examined contained an expansion or evaluation of the topic rather than the kind of restriction which Becker and Christensen suggest. Consider the following passage from THE OUTSIDERS (p. 66):

> Buck answered the door when we knocked, and a roar of cheap music came with him. The clinking of glasses, loud, rough laughter and female giggles, and Hank Williams. *It scraped on my raw nerves like sandpaper*. A can of beer in one hand, Buck glared down at us. "Whatta ya want?" (Italics ours)

First the author presents a glimpse of wild party--loud, "cheap" music, giggling and coarse laughter, clinking glasses. Hinton could have refined this description or added further details (sights or smells, for example), but instead she elected to give Ponyboy's reaction--"*it scraped on my raw nerves like sandpaper*." This comment adds a new dimension to what has been said in the first sentence and is very similar to what Rodgers calls accretion, or what David H. Karrfalt has termed a "structural addition by completion." (David Karrfalt, "The Generation of Paragraphs and Larger Units," COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, October 1968, p. 211) Karrfalt added to Christensen's concept of the coordinate and subordinate structure the idea that a sentence may occur at a "higher level of abstraction than the sentence already present." Karrfalt defined this kind of structure as one which "is added at a higher level of generality than that of the preceding sentence, and in fact, of all of the foregoing sentences taken together as a single unit."

We believe that structures such as these are not only common in fiction but serve a useful purpose as well. In the first place they define the personalities of fictional characters. In the delineation of character, this kind of subjective, personal comment may be equally if not more effective than an objective statement. Second, it is at this point that an author may, if he wishes, inject his own values and beliefs into a piece of writing. Is it the author S.E. Hinton who really dislikes Hank Williams' music and is using Ponyboy to express this personal viewpoint? Maybe, maybe not. We really have no way of knowing for certain. The reader cannot of course assume that every fictional protagonist mirrors the values of his creator, but the reader should not be so naive to assume that fictional characters spring to life completely independent of an author's value system. Perhaps it is enough to say here that the possibility of an author-protagonist correspondence always exists, but it is next to impossible to determine it precisely from the text itself.

Third, and perhaps most important, is the fact that evaluative comments such as these have the power to mold the values and beliefs of the reader. If the reader willingly suspends his disbelief and enters wholeheartedly into the fictional realm, if he identifies closely with the protagonist, even to the point of coming to believe that he "knows" or "admires" a particular fictional character, then even after the reader has finished the work and put it away, the fictional character--his values, his tastes, his attitudes, his beliefs--can continue to live in the life of the reader. Thus a piece of fiction may actually "come to life" in the life of the reader. If the work is extremely successful (like HUCKLEBERRY FINN or THE CATCHER IN THE RYE), it may even become a part of the national myth. But there is something of a hazard in this for people like English teachers who enjoy literature very much, the hazard of living too much in a world of fantasy and too little in the real world. It is possible that one could become so involved in the world of imagination that he would lose sight of the real problems of human suffering occurring everyday before his very eyes. One other passing thought: whoever said "A book never hurt anybody" sadly underestimated the power of literature.

The new rhetorics described here represent pioneer work. Already they have provided some fresh insights into the writing process, and they have suggested some new approaches for teaching composition and literature. Like most new, groundbreaking efforts, they may seem strange and difficult to comprehend at first, and without doubt their major concepts will undergo further refinement; but the teacher who works diligently to understand them will be amply rewarded. It is our belief that these new rhetorics are useful for analyzing adolescent fiction as well as other kinds of literature. But we urge teachers not merely to take our word for it. We urge teachers to try these new rhetorics for themselves in their own classrooms. We believe they will like what they find.

THE WHOLE IS MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS: NOTES ON RESPONDING TO STUDENTS' PAPERS

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At several points in their schooling, most students will be asked to produce pieces of writing that communicate an idea forcefully to another person, so that the reader will at least respect the idea, or judge it favorably, even if he does not believe or act upon it. That is, most students will be asked to engage in "rhetorical" writing--writing that is addressed to a reader for the purpose of adding to that reader's knowledge, leading him to action, or moving his feelings (or a combination of these goals). (For an extended discussion of "rhetorical writing," see my "A Theory of the Curriculum in Composition: Goals and Writing Assignments," ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1970) In teachers' comments on such writing, I believe, the emphasis ought to be on the effect of the piece--its success in doing its job in the world. In this paper I want to comment on how teachers typically react to rhetorical writing, and to propose an alternative way of reacting to such pieces that is consistent with a writer's goals when he engages in rhetorical writing.

As I read the notes made on student's papers by many secondary--and college--teachers, I detect three tendencies that trouble me because they establish what I take to be unwise emphases in the study of writing. The first is to look simply (and sometimes exclusively) at the apparent clarity of organization in the piece; if it "flows smoothly," the teacher often implies, it is praiseworthy, and little attention need be given to what is said. Conversely, unclear organization (usually a blurring of the boundaries between sections of the paper, as teachers understand them, rather than a flaw in the logic by which ideas are arranged) is by itself a weakness, and the critical comment goes little beyond the summary judgement on organization. A second tendency is to focus on whether the writer has observed some formal conventions--of sentence structure, paragraph structure, continuity from sentence to sentence, and so on--without regard to the effect of what the student has accomplished in the paper. In such comments, the absence of deviation from principles that have been laid down and are assumed self-evidently true constitutes merit; the supreme virtue, the students are implicitly told, is correctness according to the manual or handbook the class has been studying. A third tendency is to focus on details, line by line (the teacher seems to read with red pencil in hand), and to act as if the accumulation of varied comments on details constitutes an adequate response to the paper. The need for added support here, the desirability of deleting a phrase there, the preferability of the teacher's suggested word instead of the word the student used somewhere else, the doubtfulness of an assertion in still another place--scattered, unconnected comments of this sort, occasionally summarized by a final admonition such as "give more specific details," are frequently all that the student gets for his pains.

The impression that a student may fairly take from these comments is that to write is to have many chances to do something badly, and that what one has to say, what one wants a reader to believe, counts not at all. In the eyes of teacher after teacher, it would seem, and also in the eyes of those who publish collections of "well graded" themes, a student's paper is not a whole but a collection of parts; the effect of the whole piece on the reader is of little concern. It is not surprising that students, as they get older, care little about writing and know little about how to communicate ideas with due vigor and emphasis. Their teachers--those, at any rate, who are moved to write comments at all--betray a preference for conformity in details over the success of the complete piece in doing its job. Nor is the preferred conformity merely linguistic (e.g., the use of an "accepted" dialect or register); more dangerously, it is a conformity to fragmented notions of rhetoric and style that are put forward, in good faith, as guides to or even as criteria of "effectiveness."

Teachers need, I believe, to help their students recognize that a piece of writing is not just a collection of parts or attributes, but a whole statement to which response is invited. Teachers need to learn how to respond to what the student does in his piece as a whole, rather than simply to details of statement, to surface continuity, and to choice of words. Let me sketch out a few questions that might help the teacher to assess what the student has to say (as well as the stance from which he says it), and then apply these questions to three sample papers. The questions are intended to serve as instruments to help teachers get into essential characteristics of the paper and estimate a reader's reactions; after this probing the teacher can tell the student whether his efforts at earning a desired response have succeeded, and if not, perhaps, can tell him why not.

First, a reader (a teacher) needs to identify the claim that the writer implicitly makes as he comes before the reader. The writer implicitly undertakes to offer the reader something of value, some benefit from reading, in order to gain his attention. What the writer offers, usually, is to accomplish for the reader some sort of action, some achievement, that will benefit the reader. For example, a writer may offer his reader the opportunity to share some feelings by which the reader's understanding of the writer as a person and perhaps of the human condition in general, may be deepened. More often the writer will offer his reader the opportunity to share with the writer in the examination of a problem which the writer considers helpful. More often still, the writer offers his reader the opportunity to consider some assertions, and implicitly promises to defend them in such a way that the reader will feel that his understanding of a subject, perhaps even his knowledge of the world, has been enlarged in a way both useful and pleasurable. Indeed, writers offer to perform in their work many different kinds of actions, in order to exert a claim on the reader's attention. The teacher needs to see, in each student's paper, what that promise, that claim on the reader's attention, is. Then, as a corollary, he needs to determine whether the writer has made good on that claim, has fulfilled his promise.

These questions are not the same as the familiar "What is the thesis sentence?" nor are they the same as Robert Gorrell's question, "Is the commitment made by the writer at the start of his piece discharged by the end of the piece?" For the claim made by the writer on his reader's attention may not be written down as a thesis; even if it is written down, it may not appear as a promise or a statement of plan at the start of the paper. Claims can be implied rather than stated; they may be conclusions that follow from a thesis, rather than the thesis itself. The writer's claim on his reader may be that he will perform an act that is of interest or importance to the reader, rather than that he will prove a thesis. The question is: does the writer perform felicitously the act he promised? Sometimes a reader is hard put to see what claim the writer is making on his attention, or what the writer hopes to achieve in his paper. This latter difficulty is as frequent in student's papers as the failure to make good on an implicit (but clear) promise; indeed, in the work of inexperienced writers who have not thought carefully about what and why they are writing, the failure to offer the reader a reason for reading may be more frequent than the failure to deliver what was promised. Lack of clarity about the writer's reason for coming before the reader is the reason we often find ourselves asking, "What is this piece about?"

A second question that helps test the effectiveness of a student's piece of writing as a whole is: "Are the conclusions, the judgments, consistent with and supported by the data and arguments that precede them?" (Conclusions need not be at the end of a paper; judgments and generalizations may occur throughout a piece of writing, and a reader may regularly ask whether these judgments are sustained by surrounding data.) In some ways this question is a variant of the first (in that it addresses the internal cohesiveness of thought in the paper). But the question is useful to pose separately because it may encourage the reader to look back over the piece after completing it; it thus helps a reader to check on whether the promise that gained his attention has been fulfilled, and, if it has not, in what ways it has not.

My third question, a bit less important than the first two because it looks at the form rather than at the substance of the piece, is the familiar one of whether the piece exhibits a clear and apt plan: is it possible for the reader to see, from beginning to end, in what direction the piece is moving, what steps are taken to reach the writer's goal, and why? This, again, is more than the obvious questions of whether the parts are clearly blocked out (as in the traditional outline) and whether transitions appear between sections where needed. The question is whether the reader can see what successive steps the writer was taking--the successive assertions, arguments, concessions he was making--and whether the pattern described by these steps was apt to the reaching of the writer's goal, the making good of his claim. A piece may be clear in outline and the sections neatly tied together, but if the steps follow one another without advancing the piece toward some final goal, the reader may be justifiably uncertain where he is being led and why he should continue reading.

A fourth and final question--I keep the list short so as to emphasize the fundamental importance of these ways of reading--also focuses on the dramatic interaction between writer and reader: who is talking to us? Are we in the presence of a faceless speaker or a distinctive identity? Is that identity consistent within the paper, and is it suitable to the writer's goal in coming before us? To attend to the "voice" one hears in a piece of writing is, since Walker Gibson began writing for teachers, nothing at all new, but teachers in reading papers, I have found, often content themselves with listening to the voice only in the first paragraph or two, and with noting intolerably abrasive or pretentious voices. Teachers often do not consider the dramatic integrity of the speaker who claimed their attention; they often do not ask whether the writer knew who he was throughout the paper, knew what stance he was taking toward the reader, and, if he changed his voice, whether he did so wisely, to good purpose. Pointless or confusing variation of tone is common in students' writing; it is the counterpart of uncertainty about why the writer is asking for the reader's attention--the sign of a writer who has not thought enough about what he is up to in his piece. More than for any other reason, students' "rhetorical" pieces fall short because the writers have not gotten clear for themselves what they want to offer their readers and what relationship, as one human being speaking to others, they want to establish with those readers.

I have no illustrations to offer of inept responses by teachers to papers; I am not sure that such illustrations would help much. But I can offer three papers written by students in secondary school--selected from a batch of papers given to me by the chairman of an English department in an urban public school in Hawaii--as material for a brief demonstration of how my four questions might be applied. The first writer is of average ability.

The student of today recognizes that life is short. For this reason, the belief prevails, that man has a duty to contribute to society. No longer can a man live only within the confines of his personal life, and to the world, add only his dust. The new generation, that which will become the succeeding adult society, feels the need to be prepared for this responsibility.

Presently, the public school system is the vehicle used for the education of youth. In order to fulfill this duty to society, a broader scope of the interests of man must be included in the educational process. Because of the diversities in talent and capabilities found among young people, each must find his own method and degree of involvement. To accomplish this, the student must be exposed to the basic problems of man; how he has tried to solve them in the past, why he succeeded, why he failed.

Now, as it has been in the past, man is studied in the light of conquests, wars, revolutions, and discoveries. Rarely is the nature of man examined. This, however, is one of the most important keys to understanding the actions of man in history. Perhaps if a philosophy or human relations section were included in the existing history courses, the added dimension would help to enlighten those seeking an understanding of man in society.

The discussion of man and his problems would influence and help the student in deciding the proportions and direction of his contribution.

One may, of course, wonder about the value to an average student about an assignment that would elicit this kind of paper, but the essay is still an effort by the writer to comment on his education--by no means an effort we need to discourage. His comment is stiff, formal, even--considering his introduction of moral issues that seem beyond his mastery--somewhat pretentious, and his plan for unfolding his ideas, though dimly visible after one has read the piece, is not apparent until near the end: the piece could be, in the first two paragraphs at least, a general comment on the role of education and the responsibilities of young people. But the central point to be made about the paper, emerging from the application of our first two questions, is that ultimately the piece claims attention as a proposal for change in the way history courses are taught. The claim is not evident until the end of the next to last paragraph; it is not supported by a demonstration that sections discussing philosophy or "human relations" would meet the vast needs identified in previous paragraphs. Thus the concluding assertion about what might happen in such sections is hardly an adequate "conclusion" to the paper. Much could be said, of course, about diction, punctuation, and sentence structure in this paper, if one wanted to mark up the margins, but I suggest that if one is going to offer criticisms of this student's work, the focus ought first to be on reasons why the paper does not carry out effectively the work it evidently intended to accomplish with its readers.

My second example begins as a comment on a literary essay:

MORAL COURAGE

Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant," set in Burma, centers around an incident in which the main character was faced with a dilemma. There was a temporarily deranged elephant ravaging the countryside. The elephant had killed a Dravidian. The subdivision head, a European, pursued and killed the elephant. Should the elephant have been killed?

This incident reveals a conflict of human emotions. The main character is depicted as a moral coward lacking in courage. A moral coward is one who fears doing what he knows to be right. The impression others have of him is more important than his own knowledge of what is right or wrong. Orwell's main character, a European living in a country where Europeans were despised by the native inhabitants, thought that he must maintain the European image of decisiveness of character, leadership, and physical courage. But, he knew an elephant was very expensive and worth one hundred pounds alive compared to five pounds dead. He also realized when he finally came upon the elephant that its fit of madness was probably over. Yet, from the chaos of his emotions came the decision to shoot the elephant. He shot it. He shot it because there were over two hundred "yellow faces" looking on, eager, expectant, waiting. Pride would not permit him to let the elephant live. He became a slave to the wishes of the people looking on. He did not wish to look like a fool.

This same idea is applicable to war. Each country threatens the other. Should either side not decide to concede or to come to a compromise, seemingly futile threats could become a reality. Death, destruction, even atomic warfare could be the result of pride and the stubborn insistence on the retention of a projected image.

The teacher is another example. The idealteacher is projected as ruling the class with an iron hand and piling the students with work. Teachers, in seeking to uphold this "ideal," deprive the students of expression and free time.

Lastly, even in eating, pride is applicable. The person who is offered a drink and takes it because everyone else is drinking, or because he thinks he is old enough to drink, lacks the will to say no.

Moral courage is a quality which must be cultivated. It can only occur when man is able to place his image and pride second to his integrity.

Again, some might question the wisdom of an assignment that elicited such an apparently strained and difficult exploration of a moral concept, but the student is, after all, trying to get at the essential experience of a character in a well-known work, and trying also to relate that experience to observations in his own life. Less grandiose in its announced subject, the piece is still impersonal; the statements emerge as if the writer in uttering them was not directly involving himself in his piece. The assertions come flatfootedly one after another, the student seeming almost unsure how far he can go in pushing his analogy. But comment on this feature of tone, or on the relative clarity of the organizational plan as it unfolds, seems again less important than comment on the writer's failure to recognize the kind of claim he makes to his reader. The essay is not a comment on Orwell, it is a criticism of governmental leaders and--more devastatingly--of teachers, all of whom stand accused by this student of lacking the moral courage to curb their pride and face reality. Not realizing what he was asking of his reader, he devoted most of his space to an observation about Orwell that probably no one would challenge, and gave no substantiation at all to the generalizations in his third and fourth paragraphs. His conclusion restates moral maxims that have not themselves been validated by specific citations. And so the essay does not do very well its work with the reader.

My third paper is by an honors student in a class that focused on literature.

POLONIUS

Old Polonius examplifies the ineffectual meddler more than any other character in Hamlet. The ghost courses the night, Hamlet agonizes, Claudius underhandedly plots his nephew's demise...while Polonius bumbles in and out of the affairs of all. He observes with alarm Ophelia's growing intimacy with young Hamlet and advises his daughter to repulse him. He informs Claudius that Hamlet's apparent madness is a manifestation of the poor prince's frustrated affections for his daughter: He meddles, without meaning to meddle.

Quite ironically, Polonius' role is to advise: He advises the king, as Claudius' Lord Chamberlain. He guides his children, as a devoted father should. In truth, Polonius gives advice of negligible practical worth, as the advice he proffers is followed too well or not at all: Ophelia obeys his instructions explicitly, and suffers for it. Laertes ignores his father's admonitions entirely. Claudius takes little heed of Polonius' conjectures concerning the causes of Hamlet's madness, since his unfounded suspicions are nurtured by a festering conscience.

The problem is that Polonius is not aware of his waning mental capacities, ironically commenting, "And I do think, or else this brain of mine/hunts not the trail of policy so sure/as it hath used to do..." He overlooks Hamlet's word play, understanding only that there is method to the prince's madness. He momentarily forgets what he means to say to Reynaldo about Laertes. He culminates a roundabout explanation of Hamlet's supposed insanity with a fussy commentary upon the wording of a love note. Although there are occasional glimmers of the lucidness his mind once possessed--as when he directs Reynaldo to uncover the truth through mild insinuation--on the whole, Polonius is only capable of initiating minor schemes, such as eavesdropping behind curtains.

In the conduct of his affairs, Polonius seems cautious, devious, ambitious, and unconscious of his dwindling public influence. He is pitiable because he hankers for an importance he is incapable of commanding. He panders to the king, so eager to please, and advises all who will listen, but his senility renders him an inconsequential man. Perhaps Polonius is representative of those petty officials who thrive in chaos and corruption. At any rate, irony is attendent upon almost everything he does, and Polonius meets a fitting death, skulking behind the queen's curtains, and is inconspicuously dragged away.

This piece is a forthright, unpretentious set of assertions about the character. Evidently obligated by the assignment to demonstrate her ability to draw inferences about character from action to language, the student sets down her perceptions of Polonius with minimal waste motion. She gives no sign of emotional commitment to the character or to her subject; instead, she displays an inquiring, observant temperament that might earn recognition for competence.

The student's claim on the reader's attention, however, is not altogether precise. Evidently the paper is to be a series of interpretive assertions with some support for each assertion, but how these assertions come together is in doubt. At first the reader supposes that the writer wants to characterize Polonius as an ineffectual meddler, but this elementary observation hardly encourages the reader to expect an informative paper. Having established that Polonius meddles and that he is ineffectual, the student takes a new direction: asserting that Polonius' mental powers are diminishing. And after discussing that perception for a paragraph, the student turns to Polonius' fawning ambition. She concludes by trying to identify Polonius as an instance of a type of public official, and suggesting that his movements are surrounded by irony.

Even at the end of the essay, then, the action undertaken by the student is not easy to identify, and the substantiating data is not easily relatable to what the student may be trying to accomplish. Each paragraph appears to be nearly a self-contained unit, its role in the movement of the essay toward its goal still in doubt. The reader does not know why the writer attempted to claim his attention (except to satisfy a course requirement), and his doubts are not resolved as the piece progresses. Though the teacher who received this paper awarded it an "A" and congratulated the writer, that teacher would have been wiser, I think, to advise the student to decide what work he wanted to accomplish, and then to plan her paper so that it would visibly accomplish that work. Such advice, of course, has to be made quite specific in its application to a particular paper, but these kinds of comments tell a student more about how his paper as a whole has fared than do any number of separate notes about details of argument, structure, syntax, and punctuation.

In proposing and using my four questions, of course, I am telegraphing my values in rhetorical writing: such writing needs to show that the writer has a clear idea of what he has to offer his reader in return for that reader's attention; it must indeed deliver what it promises; and the whole piece must exhibit a continuity of action from part to part, and a congruity of language with purpose. I think that these values are quite as worthy of our attention as mastery of cumulative sentences, syntactic conformity, accuracy of the reporting of data, and all the other emphases that teachers communicate to students in the cursory, or even the microscopically detailed, comments they often write.

But mine are harder values to uphold, because they require the reader to hold in mind a complete piece of writing all at once, not just to note the successive bits of the paper as each bit passes before the reader's eye. Yet writers, of whatever age, ask readers to react to whole pieces; teachers should, I think, learn to respond to whole pieces as they read. That kind of response does the student the courtesy of taking his piece--what he has to say--seriously, as a piece should be taken (a piece of writing ought not to be looked upon merely as a display of competence or incompetence in the playing of finger exercises), and it might lead students to think that they should take composing seriously. When composing is taken seriously, as a transaction between human beings to whom writing matters, as the performing of an act that seeks to accomplish work in the world, then, perhaps, composition can be taught.

BARRETT WENDELL AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF COMPOSITION

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"How far was Wendell a fool and how far was he a martyr?" is the first question, Santayana once told William Lyon Phelps. He was speaking of Barrett Wendell, who taught English at Harvard from 1880 to 1917. Or perhaps it should rather be said that he performed Wendell there. For, with the "red beard and swirling watch-chain" that caught Santayana's eye (and fancy too, one suspects), Wendell, as is the fashion among Harvard's Famous Teachers, was always something of a performer, though his role seems to have been somewhat puzzling even for Harvard. Santayana thought he wished himself "a Cavalier, all courage and elegance," and he invented a speaking tone--high pitched and of a peculiar rhythm and accent--which if it did not transport him to whatever romance there was in the seventeenth century, at least separated him from the commonplace in his own time, as the Charles separated his residence in Commonwealth Avenue from those of the mere academicians in Cambridge. The speaking style failed "as a work of elegance," Santayana said, perhaps thinking of it in comparison with all that he felt had been given him by his own Spanish-Portuguese ancestors and his tenuous connection to the Sturgises. Rather than elegance, the style showed Wendell's courage, Santayana concluded, and his "profound constant protest against being like other people."

"Rum and deco-rum" is all that is needed in this world, Wendell once proclaimed in an after dinner speech. Santayana thought it was "interesting," the "mixture of recklessness and propriety" in the pun. And if, as I like to think, there is a reflection of Wendell in Miniver Cheevy, it is clear that Robinson left out of the character all that was most interesting in his teacher and friend. For Wendell was not simply a man born too late, who "felt he belonged to the London of Beau Brummel," who would have "sinned incessantly," could he have lived with Regency elegance and mannishness. As a matter of odd fact, he seems to have been quite up to Eliot himself as a builder. The two men had their differences, one of them being over Eliot's way of advertizing the College to bring in students even from the crude western areas of the country. Moreover, philology and learned notes were hardly for Wendell's expansive bravura, and he always felt his position somewhat equivocal in relation to younger colleagues, such as Kittredge. Indeed Wendell was not made a full professor until 1898. And from the mere chronology of his Harvard career, it might be concluded that Wendell, like so many others, exists, if at all, only in the memoirs of students captivated and captured by his voice, his gestures, and his comments on themselves and their themes.

In fact, though, Wendell was, like Eliot, an educational innovator, and he seems to have invented a number of the by now standard sub-divisions of English. He set George Pierce Baker off on the study of drama. He at least sketched out a technique for teaching English composition which could have made that oddity a legitimate part of higher education. It was hardly his fault that the profession preferred (as easier?) the remorseless hunting of errors to which both rhetoric and composition were reduced by his colleagues Adams Sherman Hill and LeBaron Russell Briggs. Wendell also had his hand on the developing study of literature, urging the importance of its historical and cultural aspects, presumably in opposition to purely philological studies. And further, when his colleagues were still absorbed in their enlargement and specialization of the extension of "English literature," Wendell had already begun to work with American and continental literatures, apparently having in mind some form of the notion of comparative studies. I should perhaps also mention Wendell's considerable influences in the literary revival at Harvard, which led to the founding of the HARVARD MONTHLY, and which engaged the interests and talents of men like Santayana, Lovett, Herrick, and Edwin Arlington Robinson.

Eliot, it can be said, found Harvard still hardly more than a provincial finishing school for the great families of Boston, Cambridge, and their neighborhood and transformed it into a university of sorts. Beside that accomplishment, Wendell's own is perhaps not to be reckoned. But still his is impressive enough, especially when one thinks of what little has made a reputation for many of his contemporaries and juniors. Perhaps someday Wendell's record will be studied as a whole and in detail, so as to give him a better place in the history of the Harvard English Department, if not also in that of the University itself, bringing him into the company of his proper peers, the men who in Morrison's phrase within little more than a quarter of a century brought the study of the mother tongue at Harvard, from a mere adjunct of homiletics to a subject whose practitioners were to become a nearly dominant force in the Faculty at Harvard College.

At this time, however, I want to consider Wendell only as a composition teacher, and specifically his invention of the daily theme for his English 12, which was an intermediate composition course open to students who had passed either of the elementary courses and who wished "further to pursue the study of English composition." Wendell's "dailies" are, or anyway seem to me, an interesting subject, and one not unimportant in the quality and in the multiplicity of their pedagogical relation. The reason for this interest is partly just the simple one of the times. During the early years of Wendell's tenure at Harvard, rhetoric, the rhetoric of, say, Edward Tyrell Channing and the Rev. James Bowyer, was being transformed into "composition" in the interests of that study of the mother tongue that Eliot had urged in his inaugural address in 1869. So in a way there would be interest in any changes or inventions in teaching techniques that were then made to meet his demand. But for us today, in these our own uncertain times, there is also Wendell's specific intention for his dailies. It seems likely that Wendell thought of the writing in English 12 as perhaps a kind of antidote to the error hunting of errorless propriety or, more charitably, the interest in "rhetorical correctness" that characterized English A and B at Harvard. Wendell was neither so foolish nor so wishfully ambitious as to suppose that English 12 would make writers. What he did want and did believe he accomplished was that, in English 12, he should bring students somewhat closer to a feeling for literary works as "the lasting expression of the meaning of life," and perhaps also to a "sympathetic understanding of the ancestral experience of our own race which in the vital form of our natural heredity still animates the living world of which we, in our own passing New England, form a momentarily conscious part" (Barrett Wendell quoted in report of the eighth annual meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, THE SCHOOL REVIEW, December 1893, 638-650, the quotation at p. 640). But negatively, in his racism and in what I suppose may be called his regional elitism, and positively, in his feeling (the expression of one part of his conflicted personality) that observing the conventions of punctuation and of a usage that is current, national and reputable does not constitute even necessary let alone sufficient conditions to say of a man that he is educated, Wendell has something to say to us today, if not quite as a mentor, at least as an example or warning.

To anyone who went through or taught in a freshman composition course before, say, 1960 (when close analysis of literary texts began to come into vogue), the structure of English 12 will be familiar enough. Wendell lectured on the principles of the art of English composition, criticized good and bad themes, and, it appears, from time to time discoursed on topics of the day, occurrences or general problems that, he must have thought or hoped, would engage the interests of students. Wendell seems to have exercised his wit and somewhat quirkish standards especially in these comments, though of course he by no means restrained himself from pithy and pointed remarks about and on student papers. For their part students wrote dailies and fortnightlies and submitted them for criticism not only by Wendell but even sometimes by their "co-peers," who could thereby demonstrate their knowledge of the principles set forth in the lectures.

The fortnightlies themselves are pretty interesting; perhaps I may be permitted a word or so about them. They were to originate in, if not touchstones, at least apposite quotations which Wendell supposed would provoke, but which his students more likely found as decorative epigraphs for, essays reflecting on rather large topics associated with the literary culture. Palgrave was thought of as a good source. In the second term, the fortnightlies were to be conceived as treatments of divisions of a single subject, preferably, for reasons of economy, one connected with college work, though in practice a student could use any topic of interest to him, so long as it could be approved.

By means of the fortnightlies Wendell hoped to bring his students into touch with the values expressed in the literary tradition, at least as represented in Palgrave, and also to put them (somewhat osmotically, perhaps) into the condition that enables good writing. But, Wendell felt that the fortnightlies had some sort of disciplinary power, due apparently to the fact that care, thought, and consequently time were required if they were to have the literary qualities he wanted. There was discipline, too, in carrying the extended investigation and composition necessary to that early version of the research project. At the end of the term the students or some of them would know a little of what they would be letting themselves in for if they were ever to write books, the weariness that only backbone and hope can overcome.

It is the dailies of English 12, however, that persist in the legend, though now perhaps only faintly. Physically, the dailies were to be written in black ink on no more than one side of a sheet of theme paper, which was to be folded lengthwise and endorsed, as on a book cover, with the student's name and the date of writing. They were to be turned in at Wendell's office on the day following that of composition. Overdue ones were never considered. Dailies were not required on Sundays and holidays.

Technically--and spiritually, as it were--the dailies were exercises in fluency, immediacy, and specificity. Wendell may have thought of them as similar to diary entries, modest reports of events or observations, apparently not involving reflection, though that distinction seems to have been hard for students to catch. I take it that in them he hoped to find realization of his "belief that the best thing anyone can do, when occasion serves, is to tell us what he himself knows. It may be of small value, but at worst it is not second hand" (ENGLISH COMPOSITION, NY, 1899, pp. 8-9). Wendell was emphatic that the dailies not have titles, presumably because he wanted them to be not so much formal composition as notes by men of some intelligence trying to find significance in "incidents and situations from common life," as Wordsworth put it, and using writing as a means or help to that end.

For Wendell the dailies had a rather profound ethical significance and function. "No two of us," he says in ENGLISH COMPOSITION (p. 264), "can possibly live quite the same life; and so the suggestions that every sight we look at arouses in our minds must differ,--slightly and subtilely, but surely, --as each of us is different from every other. Whoever takes that commonplace walk [one over a bridge, to which he has alluded earlier], then, must have an experience different from any he has had before, or will have again,--different, too, more subtilely still, from any other man's."

-He goes on to say that be based his composition teaching on the belief or, as he perhaps felt it, the fact that the artist is marked by his ability to perceive "what makes one moment different from another." He adds that "to make life interesting" nothing is more effective "than a deliberate cultivation of such perception." What the audience at his Lowell Institute Lectures must have thought about Wendell's notion that life is to be "interesting," to say nothing of the connection he seemed to make between artist and young people writing exercises in aid of the study of the mother tongue, is hard to imagine. In fact, Wendell quickly took care of any curiosity or discomfort that he might have caused his audience by a neat analysis of the "needs" of his students and--not by any means incidentally--of the needs thereof that were then--and still are--carried within school English.

> The boys who come there [to Harvard College] have been trained chiefly in books; and not so trained that they realize what good books really are,--honest expressions of what, in one form or another, real human life has once meant to living human beings. Every-day life to them is a very meaningless thing,--a thing it were a waste of time seriously to attend to. For some years it has been my custom to ask these boys, in one of my courses, to write for me some record of every day in the college year. What I bid them chiefly try for is that each record shall tell something that makes the day on which it is made differ from the day before. (pp. 265-267)

The students think the writing will be a dull task, and a dull task most of his friends think the writing must be, Wendell says. But with the passing of the term, students, he says, find their task growing "less dull" (which is perhaps not the equivalent of "more interesting"), and the readers "generally" find theirs "far from dull."

> --and as the months go on, more and more of these boys begin to find out for themselves how far from monotonous a thing even the routine of college life may be if you will only use your eyes to see, and your ears to hear. Many of them, too, begin by and by to feel what any sympathetic writer must finally feel: that this real human life of theirs, this human life is peculiarly theirs, is the source from which they must draw whatever they really have to say. It is not often that they learn more than this,--how to use this daily experience, this real knowledge, in writing of a more formal kind. . .Then I try constantly to remind them that whenever, for any reason, they undertake to express themselves about anything, they must try to understand it in just the way in which their daily notes have shown them they can learn to understand the commonplaces of daily life.

You may well ask how (in the middle of Shaw and Wilde, so to speak) Wendell, or anyone, for that matter, could write, still less utter, that clause "a thing it were a waste of time seriously to attend to." Even the curious terminal preposition can't quite make English of it. [illegible] its existence ought to make us wonder about Wendell as a composition teacher, especially since there is a whole passage in ENGLISH COMPOSITION (pp. 112-113), where Wendell seems to use "composition" as a synonym for "sentence." But perhaps I can put the question of his practice aside for a bit, while I take some "time seriously to attend to" Wendell's theory of composition, or his reason for valuing the teaching of composition.

In the passage I have just quoted, Wendell seems to base his argument on "the sympathetic character of the artist," his ability to perceive the uniqueness of the moment. Composition teachers may be put off, as I have suggested his audience would have been, by Wendell's apparent analogizing, if not identifying, of artists and college students. But the idea is not all that startling. That there is some sort of parallel between artistic construction and the construction of the self or at least of those of its functions having to do with values, especially values of a more or less general or shared sort--this has been a root belief in Anglo-American critical theory ever since Wordsworth, with perhaps no great sophistication, defined a poet as "a man speaking to a man," and since Coleridge, in a Delphic moment, invented the two imaginations. Our poets have told us that "in nature and the language of the sense" we must find alike "the anchor of our purest thoughts" _and_ the nurse, guide, guardian of our hearts; indeed the very "soul of all /our/ moral being." They have told us of leaving jars in "slovenly wildernesses," to take "dominion everywhere," of metaphors that reconcile and of rock-splitting saxifrage, of falling in love with unreality and of cats moving among licorice sticks and tootsie rolls, of foxes entering dark holes of heads and of imaginary gardens with real toads in them. The idea is endemic among them.

"Reason," Shelley said, "is the enumeration of quantities already known, imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitude of things. Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance."

T. S. Eliot echoes him. "It is a function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing order upon it. . .it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby elucidating some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness, and reconciliation, and then leave us, as Vergil left Dante, to proceed toward a region where that guide can avail us no further."

The high, or anyway amateur, mysticism in which Eliot concludes his thought is, of course, no part of my immediate argument, and indeed it is to my taste at all only when I think of the assertions that are being made these days about the value not so much of art itself, as of its study in the academies. What I am interested in in Eliot--and in the other poets I have quoted or alluded to, is the conception of the ordering and envaluing function of art and, _a fortiori_, of humanmentation in general, of which the specific artistic function is a derivative. In this tradition, as I understand it, not only does the eye impose form on the blooming buzzing confusion of sense data, but also there is a process by which values, meanings, significances, especially those by which a culture is constituted, or created in and become in turn necessary conditions of the informed materials of experience. I am not sure what this process is to be called. No doubt the concept goes back (in our day and among those interested in the currently New Englishes, through Cassirer and Mrs. Langer, perhaps also Sapir and Whorf) to Kant's analysis of the basis of synthetic judgments. But to use Kant's terminology might only further confuse what is at best, at least as it appears in current pedagogical literature, more an article of faith than a fully articulated doctrine. So perhaps I should simply stick with Coleridge's Primary

Imagination and Shelley's "Poetry, in a general sense, /which/ may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination.' " Though not identical the functions to which the two famous terms refer are alike enough.

At the moment, I haven't the least idea whether Wendell had or could have had any systematic knowledge of the philosophical foundation of romantic literary theory, even so much as might be gathered in an undergraduate course in the history of philosophy. But it is hard for me to believe that, in 1890, when Wendell delivered the lectures that became ENGLISH COMPOSITION, the academic community would not have been using the tenets of romantic theory that connect it to the critical philosophy. And so it seems to me that, when Wendell talks about "the sympathetic character of the artist" as a kind of ideal of what he expects to develop in students in his writing courses, we are not required to suppose that he is thinking of himself as a begetter of Artists. The power of creation,of ordering, of approximating the beautiful (to adapt a phrase of Shelley) is a general one, present in all men, and--so to speak--waiting to be cultivated.

Indeed it is something of this sort that Wendell seems to have been saying in the apology for his life's work as a teacher of composition that he gives at the end of ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

> Bewildering, depressing, maddening, debasing, I should have found this work years ago, but for the growing conviction, which strengthens as the years go by, that the meanest of these works /student papers/, if we will only let ourselves see it truly, is a very marvelous thing. Careless, thoughtless, reckless as these boys so often are, the most careless, the most thoughtless, the most reckless of all, has put before me an act of that creative imagination for which, as I have said to you before, one can find no lesser word than divine. All unknowing, and with the endless limitations of weakness and perversity, he has looked for himself into that great world of immaterial reality, which, just as he knows it, no other human being can ever know; and with these strange, lifeless conventions we call words he has made some image of what he has known in that world which is all his own; and that image begins by and by to arouse within me some conception of what life has meant to him. (p. 304)

It is, I think, a rather noble passage or at least a moving one. Even Wendell's style and his oddly Calvinist view of Harvard students do not weaken its impression. And one could wish that its ideas had been allowed to enter the teaching and textbook tradition in composition. We would all, it seems to me, be the better for having their most Wendellian expression.

> For he who scrawls ribaldry, just as truly as he who writes for all time, does that most wonderful of things, --gives a material body to some reality which till that moment was immaterial, executes, all unconscious of the power for which divine is none too grand a word, a lasting act of creative imagination. (ENGLISH COMPOSITION, p. 40)

Was there ever anywhere so lofty a defense of graffiti as this of Wendell?

But, alas, Wendell was at bottom a composition teacher after all; and one of the nineteenth century at that. Maybe he didn't indulge himself in hunting errors, and he may not have done much with "formal rhetorical construction"; but he did emphasize "straight thinking," and he seems to have taught that the best way to clarify thought is to express an idea "clearly, concisely, and effectively." Wendell helped his students, one of them says, "to find something we wanted to say: then he helped us to say it well, but, above all in our own ways." But yet he "set the art higher than the individual and never let his praise of the accomplishment leave the writer in smug satisfaction that his utmost goal had been reached." (W. R. Castle, Jr., "Barrett Wendell--Teacher," ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF BARRETT WENDELL, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 3-10; George Pierce Baker, "Barrett Wendell," HARVARD GRADUATES MAGAZINE, June 1921, pp. 574 and 576)

For all his talk about that creative imagination for which no lesser a word than "divine" will do, Wendell seems to have been no better able than the rest of us to invent classroom techniques equal to or even connected with any process of giving " a visible material body to an eternally immaterial reality." His dailies were intended to cultivate not only fluency, as I have said, but also regular work habits, as the fortnightlies were to go after correctness and vigor. On the evidence of ENGLISH COMPOSITION, which was an outgrowth of his teaching and became the textbook for his writing courses, Wendell must have concentrated his teaching (as opposed to his responding) on the surface properties of style or, as the technical vocabulary has it, "writing." Thus early in the term, for example, he would discuss words: their purity under the two categories (only) of barbarisms and improprieties; their kinds under the categories of origin (Latin or Saxon), length, denotation, economy, and figures. He would then go on to the larger "parts" of writing, the sentence, the paragraph, and the whole composition. Having disposed of the "elements" of style, Wendell would take up its qualities: clearness, force, and elegance. Throughout Wendell emphasized what he called the "principles of composition," his famous triad of unity, mass, and coherence.

Faced with abstractions, to say nothing of definitions like "Clearness is the distinguisging quality of a style that cannot be understood," "Force is the distinguishing quality of a style that holds the attention," and "Elegance is the distinguishing of a style that pleases the taste" (ENGLISH COMPOSITION, pp. ix, 194; ix, 236; x, 272; also 8-11), Wendell's students must have been hard put to know what they were to do in the writing that would be accepted as indicating improvement. It was, by the way, to Saintsbury's evolutionist's view of English style that Wendell, their judge, went when he needed a system and examples for his remarks on the qualities of pros in general. And that is not a very promising source of help to young men who, according to Wendell, borrowing from the HISTORY OF ENGLISH PROSE STYLE, wrote primitive unstructured sentences like those of their Henrician and Elizabethan forbears, as if English were still a synthetic language. With historical generalizations transferred to them from Saintsbury, and with Wendell's own local affections and conservative ideals pointing them toward mannishness and good form in literature, to use Santayana's words (PERSONS AND PLACES, II THE MIDDLE SPAN, N. Y., 1945, pp. 178, 171), the students in Wendell's composition classes could, depending on their literary tendencies or "commitments," have acquired a sense for his notion of Good Writing.

It seems possible that students could also have learned a scheme for composing a paper, or at least for putting one together. But Wendell's remarks on the composing process are not, it seems to me, very certain in direction. On the one hand, he talks of thesis sentences, of note-sheets holding (I think) topic sentences for paragraphs, and of the need for transitional sentences that will clearly show the relations between paragraphs. He even suggests sorting and re-sorting the note-sheets to get at the exact relations among their various ideas. Here Wendell may perhaps have been getting at a notion of composing from a more or less randomly arrived at collection of ideas or propositions, with order and significance being intuited, so to speak, after meditation or some sort of nearly free association. But in this suggestion of composition as process, Wendell seems to give little place to the raw data of experience, the observations, facts, and details of which he made so much in talking about his dailies, and the total effect remains somewhat academic, rather like the common directions for a freshman "research" paper.

But there is another hand to Wendell--not the famous open one of rhetoric, perhaps, but rather one reflecting his own aspirations as a writer of fiction. When in this guise Wendell would talk of concentrating attention "as closely as we possible can on the reality which we would make real to others than ourselves." Rem tene, verba sequuntur, as Cato had it. And at least once in ENGLISH COMPOSITION (pp. 211,212), speaking of the ways writers clarify their ideas, Wendell says that some talk them out to some docile listener, others think them out sitting still or "walking alone in the open air," and then there are those others who state their problems to themselves and then go about "all manner of other business, trusting, from experience, to something they call unconscious cerebration." The phrase about unconscious cerebration sounds invidious, or at least unbelieving. And indeed Wendell here again cites the note-card business as his method when putting together his lectures on Elizabethan drama. But again we should note his remark, "I have been fully ten years in making up my mind what I think of the matters I am now discussing /in ENGLISH COMPOSITION/."

"Words and sentences are subjects of revision; paragraphs and whole compositions are subjects of prevision," Wendell said, using, in the second clause, a word to please a modern ear, though hardly with the accuracy to be hoped for in one who must have been brought up on Campbell's criteria of usage. For, in Wendell's fullest description of what a writer does, there is not much sense of the uncontrolled, the uncertain. In Wendell's view

> --the experience of pretty much /!/ every writer is something like this: An idea presents itself to him in a general form; he is impressed with some fact in experience, perhaps, which nothing but the most exquisite verse can formulate; or perhaps he receives an invitation to dinner which he wants to accept. His first task--and often his longest--is to plan his work: he decides how to begin, what course to follow, where to end. His next task is to fill out his plan; in other words, to compose, in accordance with the general outline in his mind, a series of words and sentences which shall so symbolize this outline that other minds than his can perceive it. His final task is to revise the work he has executed, and to see whether he has succeeded in producing the effects--denotative and connotative--which he had in view. (ENGLISH COMPOSITION, pp. 116,117)

We must not boggle at that answer to a dinner invitation that Wendell puts beside "the most exquisite verse." He is perhaps in Aristotle's company there, in his sense of the meaning of "making." But what I think we can wonder at is the rather mechanical image or plan that Wendell seems to fall back on whenever he talks operationally about that nearly divine power, the creative imagination. For his responses to the properties of the products of a writer's works, especially for student work, Wendell had a tolerably satisfactory analytical system. According to Santayana again (THE MIDDLE SPAN, p. 171):

> He was a good critic of undergraduate essays. . .He was useful in the College as a pedagogue, and there was a certain moral stimulus in his original personality.

It is an unlikely thought, but Santayana thought (p. 172) that he and Wendell "essentially understood each other." They were on the same side of the barricade, little Harvardians, so to speak, standing together against Eliot and his dream of the University. Their sympathy rested on their common affection for the College.

> We knew that the traditional follies there present were the normal, boyish, almost desirable follies of youth; and that the *virtu* there fostered and admired was genuine *virtu*, not perhaps useful for anything further, but good and beautiful in itself.

There is more. But the future of composition was not to be with Wendell and Santayana and *virtu* that is good and beautiful in itself. No. It lay rather with the busy makers of the "bad English" sentences on the Harvard entrance examinations, with teachers of spelling, punctuating, and outlining. It lay with Adams Sherman Hill and Charles Francis Adams, Jr.--indefatigable busybodies, restlessly seeking the linguistic signs that would open careers to the talented, or announce the talents of the careerist. Yet, oddly, there has always remained, for composition teachers, somewhat as did Reason for the Cambridge Platonists, a disturbing faith that in some sense their work is allied to or expressive of the primal creative energy of the imagination. But as Emerson might have said, the creation of a human being has little to do with determining the station a person must occupy in life. And I think it is fair to say that neither Barrett Wendell nor we who have followed him have ever sorted out that distinction.

SHOPTALK: A Column of Brief Ideas and Sundry Thoughts about Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom

Several years ago, Max J. Herzberg discussed six points that he felt needed to be made clear to neophyte writers in high school classes.

"1. The process of writing is detestable; authors hate it.
2. Compulsion is the best motivation for writing, and stern self-discipline is a necessity.
3. Writing rapidly need not imply loss of quality.
4. Inspiration is largely a phony and is practically a synonym for laziness, although authors sometimes kid themselves about physical conditions, and 'unconscious cerebration' may be helpful!
5. Amateurs talk about outlines; they follow usually instead of preceding.
6. Ideas come as one writes."

(Max J. Herzberg, "It's No Fun to Write," ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1952, p. 128)

"The good writer, of course, doesn't write entirely for himself, but he must be self-centered. He accepts criticism if he sees its value. He rejects criticism if it will not help him extricate himself from his immediate writing problem. The writer uses the traditions which work for him, and he rejects the traditions which do not work for him. He seeks praise, and he mistrusts it. He is most hungry for success and most fearful of success." (Donald M. Murray, "The Interior View: One Writer's Philosophy of Composition," CCCC, Feb. 1970, p. 22)

Discussing the planning of electives for the English department, Robert E. Beck poses some key questions for planning the uses of literature, writing, language, listening and speaking, the library, and non-print media. Below are given the questions he asks related to writing:

"1. What writing assignments would be uniquely appropriate to this course?
2. What more general writing assignments would lend themselves to its purposes?
3. In what ways can the literature stimulate writing in this course?
4. In what ways can films, slides, recordings, and other media stimulate writing?
5. What philosophic questions could provide provocative writing topics?
6. What practical aspects of the subject matter to be dealt with could provide worthwhile writing topics?
7. How might this course evoke writing leading to publication or to some other audience besides the teacher?
8. In what ways can students themselves furnish writing topics for the class?
9. What forms of independent student writing are especially appropriate for this course?" (Robert E. Beck, "Elective-Maker's How-to Kit: Not Easy, Electives Offer Action, Interest, and Professional Growth," CALIFORNIA ENGLISH JOURNAL, October 1973, p. 30)

Alternatives to traditional grading practices are discussed by Bill Ferguson, English Supervisor for Montana, in the MATE NEWSLETTER, October 1973. Here are a few words.

"One alternative perhaps worth development and trial is the composition conference. The first step imposes a moratorium on attaching grades to student papers. In their place would be the teacher's brief but carefully planned comments and questions identifying the major strengths and weaknesses of that piece of writing. Students would be told that the notes on the papers will be the topics of a short conference between each student and the teacher. The conference would then be the opportunity for student and teacher to explore the problems of the student's work. The conference itself would be designed to produce, through

negotiation, a mutually acceptable set of goals the student would pursue in subsequent writings and the appropriate standards of evaluation which will be applied. Quite naturally, both the goals and the standards would vary considerably from student to student. Each student would, in effect, be prescribing his own course of writing development with advice and guidance from the teacher. The actual business of assigning grades would be handled in conference according to the progress the student has made toward meeting the goals agreed upon in previous sessions. Of course, the goals themselves would gradually evolve and change as student performance indicates.
Finding time for conferences should not be difficult. While the class is engaged in writing or in group activities which don't require the teacher's direct involvement, he (or she) can meet with students one at a time. Five or ten minutes might suffice for a session. Students should know well in advance when the conferences are scheduled so that they can have their material at hand and preparations made. Comp conferences require some careful planning before they get underway. The teacher will first want to collect a representative sample of each students work. He should be highly selective in suggesting the focus of both the conference itself and the problems the student will need to address in future writing. Some tentative priorities would help. These should be kept flexible and not too inclusive. Not all problems can be solved at one time, right? As the first-order difficulties for a particular student begin to recede, the focus in following conferences can shift to the next area of priority. (Example: The recommendation from an early conference might require only that the student write at greater length. Once he has raised his output, the concern would shift to other matters in subsequent meetings.)"

"The teacher of writing must also be able to tell good writing when he sees it and to help the student to do so, or how will the student ever come to evaluate his own writing? And, of course, the teachers must be able to encourage the student's progress through the following stages of writing. First must come the finding of an idea, which involves bringing all of what a person is or has read or has discussed to bear as a background for his writing. Second, once something valuable has been discovered, some sort of crude, personal outline may be necessary, almost a free association of ideas, which in the final result, might bear very little relationship to the finished product. Third, comes what some writerscall the "zero draft," in which the flow of ideas is put down on paper as fast as is physically possible, with no particular attention to syntax or writing conventions such as spelling or capitalization. Many students never get past this stage, and teachers who accept such a chaotic production and call it writing, are doomed to a purgatory of long nights and interminable Sundays red-pencilling mechanical errors. Fourth is the act of criticism, in which the writer by the cold, harsh glare of the morning light casts a pitiless eye on the result of his 'first fine careless rapture.' If the student hasn't learned what good writing is, if he doesn't realize now that his job of writing has barely started, then he is already finished. Now he must remove himself from his prose and evaluate every word, every phrase and paragraph, and, most importantly, assess the value of the essential idea to find out whether or not it stands up to the harshest of judgment, his personal evaluation. If the criticism has integrity, then the fifth step of editing now proceeds. The writer must re-order his phrases, find synonyms, add more specific details, rearrange ideas, vary his syntax, or add clarifying phrases where new ideas shift too abruptly. In other words, he must do everything in his power to produce a final draft which does not set up unnecessary roadblocks to reading caused by sloppiness, laziness, or careless thinking. Profundity should never be confused with poor craftsmanship. The writer, in the most complete sense of the phrase, re-arranges his written world; like a painter who re-arranges shapes, he tries out words and phrases until they are perfectly placed. After several successive bouts of editing comes the sixth step of proofreading, what some teachers of writing mistake as their primary task. Now the writer checks conventions of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. This step is actually an extension of courtesy to the reader. It says, 'I care enough to give you an attractive, neat, error-free piece of writing.' Editors call this 'good, clean copy.' Such a last step also ensures that the reader, who should be concentrating on style and intent, will not be stopped at any one point by distracting mechanical errors." (Robert W. Blake, "The Good Ship Rhetoric Runs Aground," THE ENGLISH RECORD, February 1969, pp. 7-8)

"English teachers work too hard at evaluation of students' written efforts. They spend incredible amounts of time on the task and seem to feel that to miss an error is to place a smudge on their teachers' badge of honor. They hurt themselves and there is not much balm in Gilead when they discover that all of this self-infliction has not really caused their students' writing to improve much. . . .

I should like to argue that most English teachers use excitement buzzers when they evaluate compositions. They find a misspelled word and go buzz! Or they get excited about a faulty comma. buzz! buzz! . . .

Consider the plight of the poor student confronted by a teacher who uses excitement buzzers. He writes home runs only to discover, later and to his regret, that his teacher had been excited that time around by stolen bases. . . Soon, he gives up in despair and writes any old thing, knowing that whatever he writes, his theme will come back looking like some Macdonald's farm of correction symbols: here an 'awk.,' there a 'sp.,' everywhere a 'frag., frag.'" (Ted Hipple speaking at the Las Vegas NCTE in 1971, from CONVENTION CONCERNS--1971, p. 20)

"In the last few years there has been an increasing effort to compensate for this unbalanced instruction by emphasizing the importance of prewriting. Prewriting is that part of the composition process that occurs before the writing of the first draft. Its chief function is to help the writer to discover and define his personal view of the subject, to see what he wants to do with a topic in a particular situation. In the earlier grades the prewriter may simply be trying to see what could be said about his subject, to list content items, but in later grades the discoveries in the prewriting stage can become both complex and subtle.

There are techniques for teaching prewriting, some of them quite sophisticated, but I have time now to mention only the simplest. For any given subject it is possible for a class, guided by an unobtrusive teacher, to talk over the possible content of a paper. Suggestions can be put on the board and evaluated, and decisions can be made about what material is pertinent to what purpose. Selected material can be organized in a crude but serviceable outline, again by the class, then each student can choose the outline he prefers and develop it into an essay of one or more paragraphs. If this kind of exploratory discussion is established as standard operating procedure, it can become an habitual way of starting the composition process, either by a class as a committee of the whole or by individual students working alone.

This kind of prewriting is valuable even when the composition process is not followed beyond the prewriting stage. Students can think out the content and organization of more papers than they have time to write or the teacher time to read. Indeed, sometimes so much of the composition process is completed in the prewriting that what remains to be done is relatively easy and may even be skipped. For example, in writing a classification essay, most of the work is done when the classes or categories have been discovered and their characteristics identified. The job of putting that information down on paper is relatively easy. This is true also of many comparisons or contrasts. Once the contrasting details have been selected and a topic sentence or thesis inferred from them, the content of the essay has been established before the first draft is started. We like to say that in a composition class we are trying to teach our students to think. Perhaps one way is ask them to think aloud about a subject and to evaluate that thinking through class discussion." (James M. McCrimmon, "New Directions in the Teaching of Composition," FLORIDA ENGLISH JOURNAL, January 1969, pp. 7-8)

An old gimmick swiped many years ago by the editor (from the ENGLISH JOURNAL?) used a technique focusing on an audience. Near Christmas, 9th grade students were handed a slip of paper (clipped from a Sear's catalogue) with a picture of a present on it. Students were told that this lovely gift was from lovable old Uncle Charley, a rich but incredibly forgetful old man, who remembered his niece or nephew existed, but who had forgotten the sex or age or interests of the relative. Gifts included baseball mitts, footballs, etc. (for girls) or slips or dolls or dresses etc. (for boys). Students were asked to write a thank you letter to Uncle Charley in such a way as to leave Charley properly aware of the gratitude and even more aware of the age and sex and interests of his relative. Some students suggested that a nasty letter for such a stupid gift was in order, but cooler heads prevailed when they pointed out that a nasty letter would almost certainly insure no more presents and no future bequest while a pleasant letter might insure both.

If you're looking for a good discussion of different ways of grading/reacting to/commenting on/evaluating student papers, you could hardly do any better than to read William J. Dusel's "Determining an Efficient Teaching Load in English," ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN, October 1955. Dusel discusses four specific ways to grade papers, "Marking to Assign a Grade," "Marking to Indicate Faults," "Marking to Correct," and "Marking to Teach Writing and Thinking." Very good, very specific help to English teachers and it could be an excellent basis for a departmental meeting and discussion of the ways to help (or kill) students.

An excellent article on style and the uses of rhetoric in teaching style is Frank D'Angelo's "Imitation and Style," CCCC, October 1973. These are some of D'Angelo's words.

"I begin with a paradox: imitation exists for the sake of variation. The student writer will become more original as he engages in creative imitation. That this paradox is true should not be surprising when we consider the close relationship that obtains between invention and imitation.

Invention, as it relates to style, is the process of discovering alternate modes of expression. Imitation, as popularly understood, is the process of duplicating these modes of expression as precisely as possible. Unfortunately, for some people the latter term connotes counterfeiting, tracing, and stereotyping, whereas the former connotes ingenuity, creativity, imagination, and originality. Yet if we conceive of imitation as the process whereby the writer participates not in stereotypes but in archetypal forms and ideas, then the notion of imitation takes on a whole new meaning.

Both invention and imitation are generative. Invention, however, is considered to be the more vital process, but invention takes time. The student who has nothing to draw upon except his own meager store of stylistic resources must, slowly and painfully, stumbling and fumbling, plod his weary way through all of the embryonic phases that are characteristics of an evolving style. The student who imitates, however, may be spared at least some of the fumblings of the novice writer. Quite often, as in the case of close imitation, his writing will be in a state of complete development. The student who imitates, in fact, becomes free from the obligation to laboriously follow the wasteful processes of slow evolutionary development. Every instance of imitation, therefore, makes possible the conditions that will facilitate the free choice of alternate modes of expression for the writer."

Floyd Rinker (in an article in the NEA JOURNAL, Dec. 1953) suggested that creative expression for bright students might be encouraged by jotting quotations on a blackboard. The quotations could be added to a notebook, discussed, written about or ignored. Rinker noted that quotations like the following might intrigue some bright children. "If you have two pieces of silver, take one and buy a lily." "He who rides a tiger must not dismount." "A funny man said to me, 'Two times two, I know is three; butif you differ, sakes alive, I'm quite content to say it's five.'"

Composition can often be related to the teaching of general semantics, for example the overuse or misuse of "proverbs" by adults and too many high school students. Discussion and writings could easily evolve from assessing the relative truth of such proverbs as "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never harm me," "a rolling stone gathers no moss," "birds of a feather flock together," "where there's smoke, there's fire," "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones," "don't count your chickens before they hatch," or "still waters run deep."

"Ironically, at a time when there are genuinely new and promising developments in rhetoric, the interests of its audience seem to have drifted elsewhere. Today, rhetoricians have brought a large and useful package of materials into the schoolhouse, only to find that most of the teachers are out on the playground, flying their freedom-and-creativity kites in the high wind that blows from Britain by way of Dartmouth.

That the wind is a fair one for the British, crawling out from under centuries of a repressive and rigidly stratified social system is, I believe, undeniable. When the breeze reaches to this side of the Atlantic, to a country whose cultural and educational development is not at all analogous to that of Britain and whose debates over teaching the whole child have already been thrashed out years ago--when this breeze blows across America, I wonder if it isn't comprised largely of hot air.

What is most discouraging about this latest swing of the educational pendulum is its evidence of the extent to which we as English teachers, as presumably intelligent people who ought to know better, tend to go charging off at full bay after every scent that crosses the trail. Rushing here and there, pursuing one fashionable trend after another--general semantics, communication theory, linguistics, films, the feelies--our history as a profession is littered with the remains of deflated panaceas. What is worse, we have probably not given any one of them the full attention which might have allowed us to explore its potential fully.

Indeed, it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and we do our students and our profession an injustice not to try to learn whatever we can, in both theory and technique, about creativity and personal expression from our colleagues in Britain. I have argued elsewhere that almost any approach to writing can achieve worthwhile results in any given composition class, provided the teacher is indeed concentrating upon writing, is enthusiastic, and knows what goals are being pursued. Where the composition class is a one-shot, unrepeatable experience, as on the college level, it makes little sense, I believe, to maintain otherwise. But in the context of the student in the school English program which spans a number of years, an endless successsion of "free" writing experiences--when there are writing experiences at all--from one teacher after another in one class after another turns out not to be free at all but instead expensive. Expensive in its waste of the wider opportunities which are available to the student only when freedom is balanced by discipline, when the act of writing is seen in its wholeness, when self-expression is tempered by an awareness of other selves with whom we must somehow try to communicate effectively if we are to have a world in which selfhood is still possible. Good writing, in short, not only deserves but demands good readers, and when we put the two together, we are in the realm of rhetoric." (Glen A. Love speaking at the Minneapolis NCTE in 1972, from CONVENTION CONCERNS--1972, p. 29)

If you'd like to see an old example of educationese, one surprisingly not especially dated, read "Right You Are if You Say You Are--Obscurely" in TIME, December 30, 1956. It's only one page but it's an unhappily excellent and accurate example of the language really used by educational people (some of them, anyway) talking to students.

In THE ENGLISH RECORD (February 1970, pp. 52-53), Robert Blake gives some assumptions about writing that might be worth discussing with students.

"1. Writing is one of the most complex forms of language acquisition for man, acquired after the abilities to speak and read.
2. Writing is never fully mastered; it is an ability always being developed.
3. Expository writing is the result of disciplined thinking. It is a complex activity, involving the skills of creating syntactic constructions, a knowledge of words and their meanings, the ability to recreate observations in writing, and the ability to follow through thought processes logically.
4. The only reason for putting something down on paper is to revise it.
5. Careful, hard writing makes for easy reading.
6. Writing is a process; it can be described and followed.
7. Writing is not talking about writing. Writing is a deeply personal act which lends itself very little to being talked about.
8. Revision is the art of making choices; polishing is the art of making choices; writing is the art of making choices.
9. There is no single standard written English; varieties of writing may be appropriate for different audiences.
10. If students are encouraged to feel a need to write without inhibitions and restrictions and are provided with an environment in which writing can be fostered, then writing will come naturally.
11. An attitude of acceptance and encouragement by the teacher, coupled with an honest insistence upon standards of good writing, is absolutely essential if students are to write well.
12. Writing in the classroom should be an unhurried, pleasant experience, not a hurried, one-draft affair.
13. Students should be provided with many opportunities to produce and talk about all kinds of writing.
14. Students should share each others' writing by reading out loud in class and discussing the writing as in a writers' workshop.
15. Students should write from an abundance of ideas; research, observation, discussion, introspection, and general knowledge precede writing.
16. Students should be helped to recognize good writing when they see it.
17. Students will come to a control of mechanics slowly but naturally; there should be a minimum of drill in formal English usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the classroom
18. A command of the orthographic conventions of writing is a low level ability within the range of abilities required for good writing, not to be confused with the actual act of writing. Certainly an insistence upon a command of mechanics should never be substituted for the act of writing itself."

CURRENT READING: A Scholarly and Pedagogical Bibliography of Articles and Books, Recent and Old, about Rhetoric and Composition in the English Classroom

Likely no field in English teaching has had so much written about it than composition and its teaching practices. Someone might argue that most of the literature is of dubious value or limited application to the classroom. Others might argue equally well that most of the literature has been ignored by too many teachers and its value or application unknown or untested. Clearly, the bibliography that follows merely skims off the top of the literature. It pretends to no completeness.

GENERAL MATERIALS ON COMPOSITION

1. P.G.Aldrich, "Why Can't Johnny Write?" ENGLISH EDUCATION, Spring 1972, pp. 181-188.
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3. Jacques Barzun, "English as She's Not Taught," ATLANTIC, Dec. 1953, pp.25-29.
4. Harold Blau, "Written Composition and Oral Discourse," ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1968, pp. 369-371.
5. Rollo Walter Brown, HOW THE FRENCH BOY LEARNS TO WRITE, Champaign: NCTE,1963. first published in 1915 and a classic in the field of composition teaching.
6. Henry Chauncey, "The Plight of the English Teacher," ATLANTIC, Nov. 1959, pp. 122-124.
7. J. Scott Clark, "The Art of English Composition," ACADEMY, Oct. 1889, pp. 369-384.
8. A.B.Clegg (ed.), THE EXCITEMENT OF WRITING, London:Chatto and Windus,1965.
9. Luella B. Cook, "Writing as Self Revelation," ENGLISH JOURNAL, May 1959, pp. 247-253.
10. Paul F. Cummins, "Composition as the Expression of Personality," ENGLISH JOURNAL, Jan. 1969, pp. 92-95.
11. Charles Davis, "The New Composition," ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN, Fall 1970, pp. 5-7.
12. Wallace Douglas, "The Nature and Present State of Composition," in Stephen Dunning (ed.), ENGLISH FOR THE JUNIOR HIGH YEARS, Champaign: NCTE, 1969, pp. 15-32.
13. Rudolf Flesch, THE ART OF READABLE WRITING, NY:Harper, 1949.
14. Robert Geller, "What to Write about: A Return to Humanity," ENGLISH JOURNAL, April 1966, pp. 457-460.
15. Walker Gibson, "Composing the World: The Writer as Map-Maker," CCCC, Oct. 1970, pp. 255-260.
16. Walker Gibson, "Composition as the Center for an Intellectual Life," in THE HUES OF ENGLISH: NCTE 1969 DISTINGUISHED LECTURES, Champaign: NCTE, 1969, pp. 73-90.
17. Walker Gibson, SEEING AND WRITING: FIFTEEN EXERCISES IN COMPOSING EXPERIENCE, NY: Longmans, 1959.
18. Max J. Herzberg, "It's No Fun to Write," ENGLISH JOURNAL, March 1952, pp. 127-131. A classic article about the realities of writing.
19. Alfred M. Hitchcock, BREAD LOAF TALKS ON TEACHING COMPOSITION, NY:Holt,1927.
20. Alfred M. Hitchcock, "Economy in Teaching Composition," EDUCATION, Feb.1904, pp. 348-355.
21. Florence Howe, "Identity and Expression: A Writing Course for Women," COLLEGE ENGLISH, May 1971, pp. 863-871.
22. Marie M. Hughes, "Writing: Too Early and Too Late," EDUCATION, April 1956, pp. 463-467.
23. Robert Hunting, "Profile of the Poor Writer," RESEARCH IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, Spring 1967, pp. 29-40.
24. James D. Koerner, "Can Our Teachers Read and Write?" HARPERS, Nov. 1954, pp. 79-81.

25. Louis Kronenberger, "How Not to Write, What Not to Say," ATLANTIC, Sept. 1965, pp. 97-100.
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